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FAME AND FORTUNE

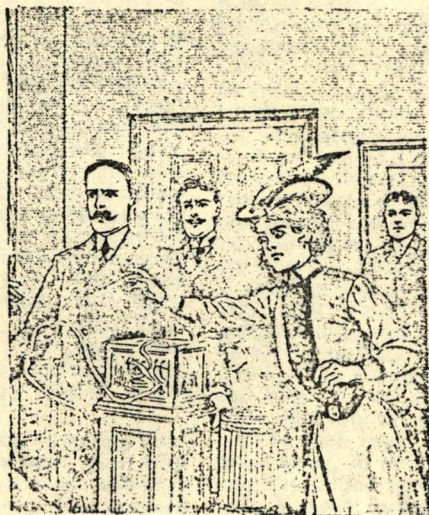
STORIES
OF
BOYS

WEEKLY.

WHO MAKE
MONEY.

LINEMAN JACK

or, The Boy Who Built a Business



FAME AND FORTUNE WEEKLY

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LINEMAN JACK

OR, THE BOY WHO BUILT A BUSINESS

By A SELF-MADE MAN

CHAPTER I.—Lineman Jack, and Who He Met On Christmas Night.

"It's tough to be down on your luck on Christmas night," muttered Jack Ready, better known among his late associates in the Western Union telegraph service as "Lineman Jack"; "but it's worse on such a night as this—black as the ace of spades, and blowing great guns. Still it might be a lot worse. The streets might be clogged with snow, the sidewalks icy, and the temperature down to zero, which, fortunately, isn't the case, though it's the time of year when such things happen. It's what folks call a green Christmas, and it isn't even cold. Now where am I to go in this confounded town? I've lost the address I was bound for, and I can't find the name in the directory. I suppose I'll have to put up at some cheap lodging-house, and I guess I won't have to go far to find one."

The speaker was a stalwart boy of eighteen or thereabouts, with a good looking, manly face, which was deeply bronzed by a long spell of outdoor work. His hands were brown and as hard as nails, his clothes worn and somewhat shabby, and his appearance generally was rough and ready. Indeed, he fitted in well with the locality into which he had strayed—the water front of Hoboken, where it was lined with a low grade of grog shops which on this festive occasion were crowded with a rough class of men, drinking and making merry in their own particular way. The whole block facing the houseless Jack shone with light. The saloons and other shops on the ground floor were ablaze. Hardly a window in the tenements above but cast its reflection upon the black night outside. Song, music and revelry floated to the ear of the young wanderer.

Apparently every one but he was enjoying himself or herself to the top of their bent. And why not? Christmas comes but once a year, and it is welcome alike in palace and hovel, only marked by the difference in circumstances. All that was lacking to the picture was a good snow storm. However, the wind was doing its part to make amends, for it was blowing at a gait that sent the water of the river dashing around the piers close by. It swept across the roofs and whirled around the corners in chilly gusts. It banged the crazy shutters of the tenements, and shook the signs over the shops below. The prospect outside looked decidedly wintry, in contrast to the warmth and illumination within, and yet, as Jack remarked, it might have been much worse.

The boy paused before a saloon and listened. A phonograph, of ancient vintage, was playing a selection of airs familiar to his childhood, and the music called to his mind happier scenes that for the moment banished the feelings that had oppressed him for the past hour. Before his mental vision rose the living room of a farmhouse decked out with Christmas greens. He saw his mother and his father, some years dead, two sisters younger than himself, now living with a relative, and a dozen young neighbors. He was only a little fellow then, but life was all sunshine to him; now—— He was brought back to earth by the whack of a hard hand on his shoulder.

"Hello, young fellow," cried a rough voice in his ear, "want to join us in a glass of Christmas cheer?"

Jack turned and saw a bronzed and bearded man peering into his face. His breath was strong with whisky, and his eyes a bit bloodshot. Close behind him were two other men on a par with himself. The boy, who was not accustomed to ardent spirits, started to decline the invitation, but the man linked arms with him and drew him into the grog shop, followed by his companions. A round-bellied stove standing in the middle of the room threw out considerable heat, and the crowded state of the room added to the closeness of the atmosphere. Half a dozen or more men were lined up at the bar while the rest of the crowd was distributed about at small tables. Everybody was in hilarious good humor, and several were boisterously so. The phonograph had just run out, and a shabby old man was putting on a new record, which proved to be a loud band effect. The stranger who had hold of Jack dragged him over to a vacant table in a corner and compelled him to sit down.

"You look cold. A hot whisky will start your blood going in proper shape," said the man. "Do you live 'round here or are you on your uppers?"

Jack saw that the best thing he could do was to act sociable, for the stranger seemed determined to hold on to him. He couldn't get away in any case, as his chair was against the wall, and the man, who was a husky fellow of middle age, blocked his escape. The other two had taken seats facing him. The barkeeper's assistant came up, and the husky man ordered four hot whiskies.

"You haven't answered my question," said the stranger, eyeing Jack curiously. "Do you live 'round here or are you on your uppers?"

"I don't live here, and I'm out of work," replied Jack.

"I thought so," said the man, looking at his companions. "Do you want a short job with big pay?"

Jack certainly did, but the stranger did not look like a person who was able to furnish it. Still it was quite possible he might be a foreman in charge of a gang of laborers. Jack wondered what the job was that promised big pay.

"Do you know where I can get such a job?" he asked.

"I do; but you'll have to start in to-night, in an hour or so, that's one reason why the pay is big. The other reason you'll find out later."

"Nobody seems to be working tonight," ventured Jack.

"Just so," grinned the stranger, "that's why we're looking for a chap about your size to help out."

"Is it an out-door job?"

"It is."

"Pretty tough night to be out, particularly along the water front."

"I'll allow it is; but this job has got to be pulled off to-night or not at all. What have you been working at? It must have been out-door work from your looks."

"It was. I've been with a telegraph repair gang since last spring. Several of us were laid off a week ago, that's why I've got to look for something else until I'm taken on again."

"What's your name?"

"Jack Ready. The boys called me Lineman Jack."

"Well, my name is Jim Bunce. My friends here are Gallagher and Brady. Now we know each other. Here's the whisky. We'll drink to the job, hoping it'll go through all right."

"How much is there in it for me?" said Jack, sipping the hot decoction.

"Enough to fit you out with a new suit of clothes and leave some bills in your pocket. Drink up."

Jack put the glass to his lips rather unwillingly. He had taken a swallow when a shabby-looking little girl came up to the table and asked for a contribution to help out her family. The interruption took the attention of the men off Jack for a few moments, and he took advantage of the chance to empty his glass into the cuspidor beside his chair. In a few minutes a fresh round of drinks was ordered.

"It's about time Flanagan and Morse were here," remarked Jim Bunce to the two men. Gallagher and Brady thought so, too, and said they guessed the expected ones would be along soon. The words were hardly out of their mouths when two roughly-dressed chaps entered the saloon and scanned the people assembled. They strolled around, and finally made out the persons they were in quest of. The newcomers were Flanagan and Morse. They received a boisterous welcome, and two more whiskies were ordered for their consumption. They were also made acquainted with Jack.

"Is he one of us?" said Morse, eyeing the boy sharply.

"Yes. I've hired him to help out on the job," replied Bunce.

"Does he know what it is?" said Morse, in a cautious aside.

"No; but I guess he'll fall in with the idea, for he's out of work, and out of money, too, I guess."

"We don't want any one we can't depend on. Any one that's likely to squeal in a pinch, you know."

"If he shows a yellow streak, we'll fix him so he won't squeal."

"It's raining. I think we ought to make a start. I've been down to the wharf and aboard of the tug. There isn't a soul on her. The fires are banked, for she's to go out in the morning, though I reckon she won't be there when the captain and men turn up. While I was on her a chap came aboard and went down into the fire room, to take a squint at the fires, I guess. I hid till he went away. Nobody is likely to visit her again for a couple of hours. It won't take us long to get steam up, and before any alarm can be given we'll be lost in the darkness on the river."

"We'll start in five minutes," said Bunce.

Another round of hot whisky was ordered and disposed of by all save Jack, who managed to spill his, then Bunce said it was time to start. He took hold of the boy so he wouldn't back out, while Gallagher and Brady, with the other two, followed close behind. In this order the party left the heated grogshop and took their way through the black street, now more cheerless than ever by reason of a thin, driving rain which had driven the last straggler under shelter, even if it was only a doorway or an awning.

CHAPTER II.—In Which Lineman Jack Finds Himself Up Against It.

If Jack hadn't been accustomed to associating with some pretty rough men while in the service of the telegraph company, he would have had some misgivings concerning the bunch he was with; and, furthermore, if he hadn't needed money badly he wouldn't have agreed to take a job on Christmas night, and particularly such a boisterous night as that was. Jim Bunce led the way to Pier —, controlled by a big European steamship line, where the tug Yankee Doodle lay idle at her moorings. With the consent of the owners her captain had given the crew of the tug a holiday in honor of the day. The fires were banked, but not allowed to go out, a member of the crew visiting the boat at intervals to keep them going. In the water front grog shops, where sailors and longshoremen gather and fraternize, everybody knew that the Yankee Doodle was tied up and that her men were away partaking in the festive merry-making. Jim Bunce and Gid Morse learned it early that afternoon, and it opened a vista of profit before their eyes. They were men of action, and lost no time in hunting up companions to share in the enterprise with them. They had to be cautious in their selections, for what they had in view savored of piracy, and the law was particularly strict in dealing with it.

Men of their caliber were not deterred by the consequences they would have to face in case the enterprise was a failure and they were nabbed. The three men they talked into the job were equally callous as to unpleasant results. Five men were wanted, but Bunce and Morse could not find the other two, that was why Bunce took Jack in tow. He was taking a chance on the boy, of course, but the lad being in hard luck, he thought he would fill the bill. At any rate, he did not in-

tend to let Jack in on the secret of the work in hand until the boy saw what it was with his own eyes, and then he would be in no position to back out. If Jack put up any protest when he realized what kind of work he was up against, he would be forced to do his part, and taken care of afterward. The pier watchman was not in evidence when the party got to the dock, and they walked down to the tug unmolested. Indeed, had any one seen them they would doubtless have been taken for the rightful crew of the tug going back aboard. Jack was surprised when he found that a tug was his destination.

"What's the work?" he queried of Bunce.

"We've got a tow, and as we're short a man we're taking you along to help," answered Bunce.

"I've never worked aboard a tug or any other kind of craft," said Jack.

"That's all right. All you'll have to do is to make yourself useful. Obey orders and you'll come out all right."

"Where are you bound?"

"Across the river."

"To New York?"

"Yes. We've got to take a railroad float down to the Kill."

"What Kill?"

"The Kill von Kull, a strait between Staten Island and the Jersey shore."

"That's some distance, isn't it?"

"Quite a ways."

"You've got to cross the bay, and on such a night I should think it would be a fierce trip, if not a dangerous one."

"Are you afraid?"

"No. I'm ready to go anywhere you fellows are. Your lives are worth as much to you as mine is to me."

"That's the way to talk, my hearty. I thought you were built of the right stuff. This night will put money in your pocket," and Bunce slapped Jack on the back and stepped off on the dock.

In the meanwhile, Gallagher and Brady had gone below into the engine-room and boiler hold, respectively. The latter started up the fires, and the tugboat's funnel soon began to belch smoke. Morse stood near the door of the pilot house for a while, and then went in. In a few minutes he sung out to Bunce. That individual ordered Jack to haul in the forward hawser when he unshipped it from the splice head. The boy obeyed the order in his customary, spry way. Flanagan stood by the after hawser. The tug was rising and falling with the uneasy rush of the tide. Waiting the right moment, Bunce let go the other hawser and sprang aboard the craft as she rose and bumped against the wharf.

Morse pulled the engine-room signal to go ahead, and the tug steamed out into the river. If any one saw her go they thought nothing of the matter, and she was soon lost in the darkness of the black night. Bunce joined Morse in the pilot house, while Flanagan and Jack sought the shelter of the engine-room, for it was raining hard now, and the howling wind drove it in sheets across the deck. It was a rough passage across the river, and as Jack clung to a support to steady himself, he wondered what it would be when they hit the bay with the tow. The Yankee Doodle panted and creaked as she strained against the wild current. White foam enveloped her bows as

she ploughed her way across the river. She bobbed on the waves like a duck, reeling at times like a drunken man. How Morse could find the pier he was bound for, which was at the foot of Thomas street, on such a dark night, seemed astonishing, but he did all right. He knew his business, and he knew the water front of Manhattan like a book. The tug entered the slip without the slightest trouble, swung around and ranged alongside a great float with ten freight cars aboard.

Bunce, with the help of Jack and Flanagan, made fast to the float in an expeditious way. The Yankee Doodle's lights were then set for a side tow. Under Bunce's superintendence the fastenings of the float were cut loose.

"All right, let her go!" shouted Bunce to Morse.

The latter tooted the whistle in regulation style and signalled Gallagher to go ahead. The tug's propeller began to churn the water, and out of the slip came the nose of the great black float. The rain, which had ceased, came on again as the tug turned the float down the river toward the bay. So far everything appeared regular to Jack. He had not had a whole lot to do so far, and he did not expect to be called on again until the float reached her destination. Outside the unpleasant conditions of wind and weather, Jack regarded the job as a cinch, and he congratulated himself on having caught on to it, as he had been promised big pay. He had no idea what the big pay would amount to, though Bunce had told him he would be able to buy a suit of clothes and still have money left. On such a basis he thought he might get \$10, though he would not make a kick if he received but half of that. The rain continued till the tug with its float passed out of the river and was off the battery. Then as they plunged and rolled about in the tempest-swept bay, and the rain subsided considerably, a change, startling to Jack, came over the situation. Bunce appeared at the door of the engine-room with a pair of axes in one hand and a lantern in the other. He called Jack and Flanagan out and ordered them aboard the float. One of the axes he handed to Flanagan and the other to Jack.

"Now then, get busy, my bucks," he cried. "Smash in the doors of those two cars."

Jack regarded him with surprise.

"What for?" he asked.

"Never mind what for. You do as you're told."

Crash went Flanagan's axe upon the car door near the lock. The fastenings shivered under the blow.

"What are you holding back for?" roared Bunce at Jack. "Use your axe, d'ye hear?"

But Jack didn't like the look of things. He couldn't understand why the car door should be splintered and broken open. A strong suspicion that something was wrong entered his mind. He raised his axe, but dropped it again. Flanagan's axe smote the door again, and it shivered under the impact.

"What in thunder is the matter with you? Why don't you get to work?" cried Bunce to the boy.

"What's the idea of breaking into this car?" said Jack.

"You weren't hired to ask questions, but to do what you are told," thundered Bunce, impatiently.

"But I don't believe you have any right to burst in the door of the car."

With a roar of rage Bunce struck Jack a blow

in the jaw that knocked him down and dazed him. Seizing the axe, he sprang at the door of the next car and smashed the lock at the first blow. By that time Flanagan had the door of his car open. He then started on the third car, while Bunce tackled the fourth. Jack soon recovered from the blow he had received, and half crouching in the darkness watched the men smash their way into the cars. Through it all the tug was snorting her way ahead, pushing the heavy float against the buffeting waves that seethed and foamed around them. Bunce came back for the lantern.

"Get up, you skulking hound!" he roared at Jack, fetching him a kick in the side.

Jack sprang up and protested that he didn't propose to be knocked around like a dog by anybody.

"I'm willing to do what's right, but breaking into freight cars doesn't strike me as the right thing," he said.

"Oh, it doesn't?" sneered Bunce. "You agreed to get in on this job, didn't you?"

"Yes, but I supposed the job was all right."

"What's wrong with it?"

"You've broken into four freight cars. What's your purpose?"

"Our purpose is to help ourselves to what's in them. Now you know, so lend a hand getting the goods aboard the tug. If you work smart I'll overlook your refusal to handle the axe, and you'll share with the rest of us in the proceeds of what the stuff fetches after it's landed."

"Then this is a thieving game, is it? That settles it, and I won't have a hand in it."

"You won't, eh?" roared Bunce, furiously.

"No, I won't."

"What do you intend to do? Wait till you get ashore, and then notify the police? Now look here, my fine fellow, you're in the swim with the rest of us, and you'll have to sink or swim with us. Furthermore, you're in our power, and we're not going to allow you to split on us. Either you'll take hold and help do your share, or we'll pitch your overboard. Now, which is it to be?" said Bunce in a threatening tone.

Jack realized that the man wasn't joking. It would be easy for him to carry out his threat. The boy knew he would be helpless in the grasp of the two men. To be cast overboard in that wind-tossed sea meant certain death. And life was sweet to Jack even though he was down on his luck. He decided that it was the part of prudence to give in. Later on, when he got away, he would notify the police.

"I'll help you," he said, in a submissive tone.

"I thought you would," said Bunce, with a malevolent grin. "Come on and let me see you do it right up to the handle."

He pushed Jack toward one of the cars, out of which Flanagan had already thrown a number of bundles of valuable merchandise he was taking out of a case he had broken into, and set him to work throwing the bundles aboard the tug.

been enticed into a crooked game, and while he worked he wondered how he would ultimately come out of it. The cars contained rich silks and other merchandise of value, the best of which was selected by Flanagan and passed to the boy, who, in turn, tossed them to Bunce on the tug. It was clear that the leaders of this piratical enterprise were well informed concerning the character of the freight in the float, and had planned the job with astuteness and celerity. If the watchers on such craft as lay at anchor in the bay saw the float go by, the wash of the waves and the howl of the furious wind drowned any suspicious sounds that came from it, and the darkness of the night shrouded from their sight the crooked work that was going on.

When the first car had been looted to the satisfaction of Bunce, the second one was tackled, and the work went on as expeditiously as possible. Then the third and fourth cars followed. The contents of several of the cars were rejected, for the tug could only hold a limited quantity of goods, and therefore everything that was transferred was carefully selected, with the view as to what it would fetch from the individuals who stood ready to purchase it at a bargain sufficiently large to pay them for the risk of handling it. It was a long and boisterous trip down the bay. The float with its double line of cars sheltered the tug considerably from the wind, but on the other hand the heave of the sea caused the heavily laden craft to roll and dip in a perilous way that threatened at times to end in the destruction of all things, animate and inanimate, concerned in the affair. By the time Staten Island was reached the looting was almost finished. Instead of taking the float into the Kill, she was headed into the Narrows, and then cut loose somewhere off Stapleton, the rascals hoping she would be carried out to sea, where she was bound to founder.

The tug was headed back the way she had come, and the tired Jack and Flanagan squatted down in the engine-room to rest themselves. The return trip was made under a full head of steam, and did not take more than half the time, though the little craft was loaded to the limit with the stolen goods. She ran into a secluded wharf at the lower end of Jersey City and was tied up. Here a couple of wagons were in waiting to cart the stuff away. Jack was not called upon to take a hand in this part of the business, as the leaders suspected he would take advantage of the first chance to slip away in the darkness and put the police on to them. To make sure that he wouldn't get away, he was sent down in the fire-room and kept under Brady's eye. The last of the ill-gotten cargo was loaded on the wagons, the drivers whipped up and the vehicles disappeared in the darkness. Where they were bound only Bunce and Morse knew. Then Brady received orders to stir the fires up and slap coal on. He handed Jack a shovel and told him to get busy.

"Where are we going now?" asked the boy, who saw that the rascals did not intend to let him escape.

"You'll find out in good time," grinned the man. The fires were roaring once more, when down the iron ladder came Bunce and Morse. The former made a sign to Brady, and that individual, dropping his shovel, grabbed his jacket and ran up to the deck.

CHAPTER III.—Lineman Jack's Narrow Escape.

It was lively work that Jack took part in. Had it been honest work he would have found no reason to protest against it. He knew now he had

"Now, young fellow, we're going to close our account with you," said Bunce to Lineman Jack.

"Are you going to pay me off and let me go?" asked Jack, hoping such was their intention.

"Yes, we're going to pay you off and let you go," said the rascal in a significant way. "If you had stood in with us as we expected you to, you'd have been \$100 richer inside of a day or two. As you have proved that you can't be trusted, we will pay you off in another way—the only way that is safe for us."

"What do you mean?" said the boy, not liking the way the fellow spoke.

"We're through with the tug and we're going to send her adrift. You'll go with her. As the tide is on the ebb, she'll be drawn down the bay, and with the seacocks open, and the wind and waves running high, you will soon fetch up at the bottom, where your mouth will be closed for good. Dead men tell no tales."

"Do you mean to murder me?" gasped Jack.

"You can call it what you like. It's a case of self-preservation with us."

"Why did you take me on this job without finding out first whether I would stand in with you?"

"We had to take you on a chance, for we were short-handed. We ought to have had a couple of more along. However, that doesn't matter now. The job has turned out a success, and if you are the only one to come out at the small end, you have only yourself to blame. Grab him, Gid."

Morse sprang at the boy with a rope in his hand. If the rascals expected to have an easy settlement with Lineman Jack, they were disappointed. He was a strong and sturdy young fellow, and when he realized that he had to fight for his life, he lost not a moment defending himself. He swung the shovel he held in his hand, and Morse went down as flat as a pancake. Bunce then made for him. Jack swung the shovel at him, too, but the rascal dropped and avoided the blow. Before the boy could recover the scoundrel seized him by the legs and tripped him up. Jack fell awkwardly, and his head hitting on a pile of coal, he was put out long enough for his enemy to take full advantage of his opportunity. He seized the line from the groggy Morse and bound the boy's arms behind him, and then tied him up to the iron ladder.

To that fact Jack owed his life, for had the rascal tied his feet and left him stretched out on the floor, this story would not have been written. By that time Morse had recovered from the effects of the whack he had received. Without the loss of further time the seacocks were opened and the two men hastily left the hold. The tug was cast off from the wharf, her engine started and the men headed her down the bay. Then they got into a rowboat and soon reached the dock. As the villains stood on the wharf and watched the retreating tug, which was acting in a wobbly fashion, they realized they had in their haste committed two mistakes—they should have lashed the wheel to hold it steady against the shifting waves, and they should have put out the lights set for a side tow. It was too late now to remedy those errors.

"We'll have to trust to luck and the night," said Bunce.

"The open seacocks ought to fill her before day-break, and no one is likely to notice her before then," said Morse.

"The boy hasn't one chance in a hundred of escaping his fate. He'll go down with the tug, and that will end both of them. Come on."

They walked away into the darkness. In the meantime Jack realized that he was face to face with death. The glare that came from around the furnace doors, together with the light from the lamp, which helped illuminate the hold, showed him streaks of water flowing about on the floor. He knew that the seacocks were open, and that the water was coming in steadily. It was only a question of time before it would flood the hold, put out the fires and envelop him in a fog of steam which would make his last moments all the more terrible. He heard the machinery pounding above his head, the propeller revolving aft, and felt the boat driving through the surges of the bay. Being light and no longer under control, she tumbled around at random. Every time a wave hit her broadside on she careened over and staggered from the shock. The water no longer flowed over the floor in streaks, but swished about to the depth of an inch. When the tugboat reeled to port, it flowed against that side, leaving the floor wet under the boy's feet; when the tug lurched to starboard the water rushed that way, almost covering the prisoner's shoes as it passed.

"I'm afraid this is my finish," thought Lineman Jack. "I never dreamed I was running into this awful predicament when I went to Hoboken to pass the evening at the home of one of the boys. And it wouldn't have happened if I hadn't lost Jackson's address. But what's the use of thinking about that now? I'm up to my neck in trouble, and as helpless to extricate myself as a new-born babe. Even if I got free I couldn't close the seacocks, nor could I stop the machinery. I might be able to steer the tug ashore somewhere, or, at the worst, find a life preserver or a plank to trust myself to as a final resort."

Jack made a desperate effort to escape from his bonds, but it proved useless. Bunce had tied him securely, and he hadn't the ghost of a show to release himself. The water was now two inches deep in the hold, and Jack's shoes were soaking wet, as were the bottoms of his trousers. As time passed the water increased with unerring steadiness until it was a foot deep. Jack had made several other ineffectual efforts to get free, and he was now beginning to give up the fight. Unknown to him in the depth of the hold, the first signs of approaching dawn were lighting up the eastern sky. Also unknown to him, a railroad tug, with steam up, lay off the Battery, with her captain and crew aboard. Likewise unknown to him, the Yankee Doodle, instead of being well down the bay, as he supposed she was, was steaming around and around in a circle. This fact, with her lights set for a side tow, was bound to attract attention along the Manhattan water front, for the tug was within easy sight of the Battery as soon as the air lightened up enough to make objects visible.

And so it came to pass that one of the railroad tug's crew noticed the Yankee Doodle, and her strange actions attracted his attention. After watching her a while he called a companion's attention to her. Then the matter was reported to the captain. One look convinced him that something was wrong with the steaming tug. No craft under control of her people would act that way.

He acted with the promptness of men accustomed to taking an emergency by the horns. The railroad tug was cast loose and steamed toward the Yankee Doodle. When she got close all hands saw that there was no one in the pilot house, nor about the deck. Their impression was that the tug had in some way escaped from her dock with steam up, but how her machinery came to be in motion, even under such circumstances, was a mystery to them. It was a perilous job for the men of the railroad tug to board the moving Yankee Doodle, but they did. The machinery was stopped, and she rolled and heaved on the bay. The sudden cessation of the engine woke Jack from the stupor he was in. The water was then hissing around the furnace doors, jets of steam rising from the crevices where the water penetrated. Then he heard the voices of men above. A thrill of hope animated the hopeless boy.

"Help! Help!" he shouted.

His cry was heard, and two of the railroad tug's crew came piling down the ladder. They stopped half way down on seeing the flooded state of the fire-room.

"Here I am, bound to this ladder," cried Jack.

The men plunged down into the water and saw the condition the boy was in.

"How is this? How came you to be tied here? Why is the tug running wild on the bay, and how came all this water in here? Are the seacocks open?"

"They are," answered Jack.

While one of the men cut him loose, the other hastened to close the cocks, which was a matter of considerable difficulty, but it was finally accomplished. Thus was Lineman Jack rescued almost at the last moment.

CHAPTER IV.—In Which Lineman Jack Is Transported To New Jersey.

Jack reached the deck without assistance, though he was stiff and sore from the effects of the rope, which the lurching of the tug caused to chafe his arms and legs. He told his extraordinary story to the men who had come aboard the Yankee Doodle, and afterward repeated it to the captain of the railroad tug. The craft was towed back to her pier and made fast, but Jack remained on the rescuing tug, because, first, he had no place in particular to go; and, secondly, the captain of the railroad tug felt it was his duty to turn him over to the detectives of the railroad company, to which the float and stolen cars belonged. He was a very important witness in the case, and could not be permitted to get away had he been disposed to do so.

Jack was duly taken in hand by the detectives, who listened to his story in some wonder, for such a bold act had not been pulled off within their recollection. The boy told all about himself without reserve, and his frank manner impressed the detectives with its truth. The fact that he had been rescued under the most thrilling conditions, which fully bore out his story, also helped to set him right in their estimation. However, they deemed it advisable to put him under temporary arrest until the five rascals implicated in the crime were caught. He was taken to a restaurant and treated

to a warm breakfast, then brought back to the pier and locked up in the office. About this time the news of the runaway car float reached the detectives.

It was something of a story. The float, instead of heading out through the Narrows, as the rascals intended she should, had been borne away by the wind and tide into the anchorage of a well-known yacht club near Stapleton. Here the bulky, unmanageable float created dire havoc. During the darkest hour before the dawn it crashed into and destroyed costly motor boats. Then the tide bore the lumbering craft off into the stream again. The momentum of the waves, however, sent it shoreward once more, and it rode down a little group of fishing boats, anchored close in, sending them to the bottom. The noise it made in smashing the small craft was heard by the crew of a tug in that vicinity. They turned out and tackled it. After some difficulty the float was secured and tied up, thus ending its wayward career.

The tug people were much astonished that such a craft should be at large in the waters of the bay on such a night. Lineman Jack's remarkable story was thus corroborated, and the Hoboken police were notified and furnished with the names and a good description of Bunce, Morse and their three accomplices. The detectives themselves went about among the grog shops, asking questions of those who might be expected to have an inkling of the affair, or at least an acquaintance with the suspected men. From what they learned they believed they had a line on the rascals, as well as the place where the crime had been hatched. They were satisfied that they would get the fellows very soon. Two men were arrested that afternoon, but when brought before Jack he said they were not a part of the gang. They were held by the police on general principles.

The news was now all over Hoboken and Manhattan, and Bunce and his crowd evidently heard what was in store for them, and kept out of the way. Jack Ready got his dinner and supper at the expense of the railroad company, and was provided with a free lodging as well. He was well treated and had everything he wanted except liberty, and that did not worry him much just then. He was happy and thankful, as he told the reporters who interviewed him, that he had escaped with his life, so that a little personal inconvenience didn't count much with him. His past history with the telegraph company was investigated, and he got a good character from the foreman of the gang he had worked with. Had he possessed a home, where he could have been located, he would have been set at liberty; but as he had no abiding place, he was held subject to further orders.

The railroad company could not afford to lose him, for they depended on him to bring the crime home to the guilty ones when they were rounded up. Bunce and Morse had friends among the railroad hands unsuspected by the company. Both Bunce and Morse had been well disguised while on the job, which was not figured on by the detectives after hearing Jack's story. Naturally, they had got rid of the disguises, and had they been arrested and paraded before the young lineman, he would have had some difficulty in recognizing them, particularly if Bunce kept his mouth shut. He had seen very little of Morse, but he believed

he would know him again. Jack was not sent to jail, as he protested against that indignity, and his innocence of intentional wrongdoing seemed evident.

He was confined to the pier office, under espionage, which he made no effort to evade, and passed his time reading papers and books furnished to him. He got daily exercise in the company of a detective, who found him an entertaining companion and a square young fellow. A detective always took him to a restaurant, and all things considered, the boy lived pretty well at the expense of the railroad company. Several days passed and little progress was made toward the capture of the five "pirates." Wherever they were, they had given Hoboken a wide berth. At night the watchman of the pier looked out for Jack, for whose benefit a cot was provided. One night a cab halted on West street close to the pier, and two men got out of it, while a third descended from the driver's seat. One of them pounded to attract the watchman's attention. After some delay he came to a small side door to find out what was wanted.

"We belong to the Hoboken police, and we have come after Jack Ready, the chap who is being held here as a witness against the river pirates. We nabbed the men this evening out in Newark, at least we believe they are the men, and the chief sent us after the boy to identify them," said the man, showing the badge of a Hoboken officer.

"I can't let him go from here without orders," said the night watchman.

"Can you communicate with somebody in authority right away?" We'll wait."

"Yes."

The watchman started to close the door, when the three men, with a concerted effort, forced it open and seized him. While the foremost held him with a grip on the throat, the other two bound him hand and foot. He was then gagged and dragged to a convenient place and left. The three men made direct for the office, which they opened with the key they had taken from the watchman.

Jack was asleep, and was bound and gagged before he aroused himself sufficiently to understand the situation. Two of the men bore him to the cab, into which he was shoved, while the third followed with his clothes. One of the men got into the vehicle with the boy, a second got up with the driver, while the third crossed over to the other side of West street as the cab started toward the Pennsylvania ferryhouse. With the blinds pulled down the cab drove on to the boat, which in due time started across the river with only a few passengers aboard. When she ran into her slip the cab drove off and disappeared into the night. Jack was at a loss to understand why he was treated in this unceremonious way. He was sure that the railroad detectives wouldn't handle him so roughly. Still, who else could have invaded the shut-up pier and taken charge of him. The fact that he was gagged and hadn't been allowed even to dress, looked bad to him. He would have protested had he been able to use his tongue. The only thing he could do was to remain quiet and let things shape themselves. After leaving the ferryboat the cab rattled along for a long distance through the lighted streets

of Jersey City. Finally it came to the suburbs and turned off into the meadows, where the driver was forced to pick his way under the direction of the chap beside him. It finally halted before a ruined shed. Here Jack was taken from the vehicle, unbound and the gag removed from his mouth.

"What's the meaning of all this?" he asked.

"You'll learn presently," said one of the men.

"Here's your clothes. Put them on."

"It seems a curious way to treat a fellow," protested the boy, as he got into his garments.

"We had to do it to get you away from the pier. The detectives didn't want to let you go. We had to have you, for we want you to identify the river pirates, whom we have spotted close by here. When we're done with you we'll let you go."

The explanation somewhat reassured the boy, who had no suspicions that he had fallen into the hands of his enemies. The cab drove off, returning by the route it had come, leaving the boy with the two men at the shed. Jack was not rebound nor gagged again after he had dressed himself. The men took him between them, without holding on to him, and the three started off across the low meadows.

The night was a bright one, the sky brilliant with myriads of stars, and a crescent moon hanging like a scythe without a handle in the deep blue ether. There was light enough for the party to pick its way along the pathless stretch. In a short time they reached the bank of the Hackensack river. Here in a sheltered indentation of the shore they came upon a sloop, moored to a post driven into the sand. Her mainsail lay spread out over the lower boom just as it had been lowered, and was in readiness for instant hoisting. Her jib, partly down, fluttered in the night wind. A bright light shone through her cabin skylight, indicating that one or more persons were on the boat.

"Step aboard," said one of Jack's conductors, and he was helped into the cockpit, where the men followed him.

Then the man who had spoken tapped three times and then twice on the door. A bolt was presently withdrawn, and the door was thrown open.

"Enter," said the man.

Jack did so, and confronted Jim Bunce and Gid Morse, disguised as on the night of the deed of piracy.

CHAPTER V.—Lineman Jack Turns the Tables on His Captives.

Lineman Jack was taken by surprise, and he stopped and stared at the two men. They were seated at the narrow folding table playing cards, with a whisky bottle before them, and a glass at their elbows. A vacant camp-stool stood at the end of the table nearest the door. This had apparently been vacated by the man who opened the door, and who Jack recognized as Gallagher. No surprise was shown by either Bunce or Morse at the appearance of Jack. He was evidently expected.

"Well, young man, we meet again," said Bunce, with a rascally grin. "You didn't go to the bot-

tom of the bay as we expected you should, but escaped to enlighten the detectives of the railroad company concerning the events of Christmas night. Since then you have been living a life of ease at the company's expense, though your plane of action has been somewhat restricted. We have taken the liberty of relieving the company of the trouble of keeping you, and also of an important witness in the case. With you out of the way nothing can be proved against us if we should be arrested. As this is New Year's Eve we extend to you the hospitality of this craft, which we are the owners of pro tempore, or, in plain English, for the time being."

"So I've been kidnapped from the pier by friends of yours," said Jack. "With a watchman on guard I don't see how they did it, but there is no doubt that they were successful. Now that you've got me, what are you going to do with me?"

"We haven't fully decided. We might tie a stone around your neck and drop you in the river, completing the job that your rescue from the sinking tug defeated. Or we might fix you in some other way to pay you up for the trouble you've given us. This is a lonesome spot, and it is not likely that any one will turn up to interfere with anything we choose to do," said the rascal. "Go on, Sid. It's your play. I took in the last trick, and there is my king."

"Well, I suppose I can't stop you if you're bent on getting square with me; but it seems hard luck to be done up by——"

Jack stopped.

"Well, why don't you go on?" grinned his enemy.

"What's the use of my saying anything?" said Jack, bitterly.

"If you've anything on your mind, you might just as well come out with it. If it isn't complimentary to us, we don't mind. We like to hear a fellow express himself as he feels."

"I have nothing more to say."

"All right. Sit down and make yourself at home. This being the night before the New Year, people should be on good terms. Help yourself to a drink."

"I don't drink."

"Have you signed the pledge since Christmas?"

Jack remained silent. He saw that the man was playing with him, as a cat might play with a mouse before giving it the finishing blow. From the deck came the sounds of the hoisting of the mainsail, and in a few moments the boat was in motion. Soon afterward the card game was finished.

"Sit down, young fellow. We are taking a short sail this beautiful evening. It ought to make you feel better and show you that our intentions toward you are not as bad as you have feared. If we meant to put you out of the way, the spot we have just left was admirably suited to such a deed. We don't like to end the old year in such a way. Having failed in our original attempt, it doesn't make so much difference. You have blown the gaff, as the expression is, and you haven't done a whole lot of damage to us. We intend to hold on to you for the present in order to keep you out of bad company—meaning the hirelings of the railroad company. They

won't be pleased when they learn that you have decamped, whether voluntarily or otherwise, and as we are not in sympathy with them, we are glad to give them something to worry about."

Gallagher had gone outside, leaving Jack with the two pirates. Bunce got up, stretched himself, then he walked to the door and looked out. Morse shuffled the pack of cards in an idle way, and paid no attention to the young lineman. Jack, who had seated himself on the camp-stool, waited for the next act in the drama. Bunce shut the door and resumed his seat.

"Now, look here, Ready, we'll make a deal with you," he said. "We don't want you to appear as a witness against us in case any of us are pinched. We'll give you \$250 cash down, and get you a ticket for Chicago, or any city out that way you name, if you promise to go West and lose yourself. What do you say?"

"That would make me a confederate of yours to a certain extent, which I don't intend to be," replied Jack. "Furthermore, it wouldn't pay me. I never could work for the telegraph company any more. The railroad company would see that I was spotted and brought back the moment I applied for work. To avoid trouble, I'd have to be on guard all the time, just as if I were a criminal who was wanted. I could not stand that kind of life, so I decline your offer."

"You're a young and healthy chap, and I don't see anything about the telegraph business for you to hanker after it. There are plenty of other kinds of work, not near so hard, you could take up with, and the money we offer you would keep you in good shape while you were looking around for something that suited you."

Jack shook his head.

"I don't want to have any dealings with you," he said.

"What did you expect to gain from the railroad company for acting as witness against us? Have you been promised money?"

"No."

"Do you expect the company to reward you?"

"I have no expectation in that line. It is my duty to give them all the aid they ask for in punishing you chaps. Anyway, I have no particular say in the matter, for they placed me under arrest, though I was not sent to jail."

"Suppose we let you go, what would you do?"

"Return to the pier and report how I was kidnapped."

Jack's tone and manner showed that he meant what he said. The two rascals looked at each other. They saw that they could make no terms whatever with the boy. Bunce got up and signed to Morse to follow him outside. They shut the door and left the boy alone. They were away fifteen minutes.

"We'll give you ten minutes to accept our proposition," said Bunce, on their return. "If you refuse, you won't see another sunrise. You are the only person we are afraid of. With you out of the way the authorities and the railroad company can go as far as they want, they won't be able to prove a thing against us. We are not stuck on taking your life, if we can avoid it, that's why we have offered you a chance to make yourself scarce. If you won't go voluntarily, and give us your word to stay away, we'll have to put you out of the way. That's all there is to it.

If you lose your life it will be because you're a fool, and we won't consider ourselves responsible for what happens to you."

"Murder is murder, no matter how you put it," said Jack.

"We call it self-preservation. Every man has a right to protect himself. I know men who wouldn't waste time arguing the matter with you. We are taking some chances in letting you go away, for you might be found and brought back; but we're willing to take a chance on it."

"You can do as you choose. I won't make any agreement with you."

"That's your final answer, is it?"

"Yes."

"Then your death be on your own head," said Bunce, in a compressed tone. "Call Gallagher," he added to Morse, who was standing in the background.

Walking to one of the bunks, he put his hand under the pillow. Not finding what he was after, he fumbled around. Then he uttered an imprecation. Crossing to the other bunk, he tried that with the same result. Jack got up and seated himself on the first bunk. In each hand he held a revolver, which he had found during the interval he was left alone in the cabin. Bunce turned to find himself covered by one of them.

"As you have decided to put me out of the way," said Jack, calmly, "I have decided that I won't go alone. Stand against that forward bulkhead or I'll shoot you down where you are."

There was business in the boy's tones, and he had the means of enforcing obedience. Bunce had no wish to lose his life, and as he believed the young lineman would shoot without wasting much time, he backed up against the bulkhead. Morse and Gallagher made a jump at the plucky lineman, intending to disarm him. As Jack expected something of the kind, he swung partly around and fired at both of them. Both shots took effect, and the two men fell wounded to the floor. With the smoke covering his movements, Jack jumped for the door, pulled it open, stepped out and confronted the two men in the cockpit, who for the moment supposed that Bunce had shot the prisoner. They uttered startled ejaculations when they saw the boy with a smoking gun in each hand. This was something totally unexpected by them. The young lineman sprang upon the cabin roof, and, covering the helmsman, ordered him to steer for the shore.

The other man started for the cabin door.

"Sit down!" cried Jack.

The fellow hesitated and then obeyed. At that moment Bunce came to the door. Not seeing the young lineman, he stepped out. Jack reversed one of his revolvers.

"Look out, Bunce!" cried the helmsman.

The warning came too late. With a swing of his arm the boy knocked the piratical ringleader spinning with a blow on the head. He fell senseless across the side of the cockpit. Just then Jack saw a large sloop some distance ahead at the head of Newark Bay. He ordered the steersman to lay his course for her. The man did so with evident reluctance, but Lineman Jack was master of the situation, and he had to do as he was told.

Morse and Gallagher were groaning in the cabin. They were badly hurt, though not dan-

gerously so. For the next half hour Jack kept the two men in the cockpit in subjection, and by that time they were close to the lumbering sloop. Only the helmsman was visible aboard of her, and he was half asleep. It was now between three and four in the morning. As the small sloop slipped up close to the big one, Jack fired one of his revolvers to attract attention. The helmsman on the big sloop jumped nearly a foot and looked around. Jack saw he was a good-sized boy.

"What are you firing for?" asked the lad, evidently feeling at ease.

"Who's aboard that craft besides yourself?" asked Jack.

"My old man and another man."

"Rouse them up, then."

"What for?"

"Because I want to see them."

"What you want with them?"

"Do as I order you to," said Jack, flourishing his revolvers.

With a cry of fear the boy abandoned the tiller and dived into the dark cabin, where he awoke his father and told him they were being boarded by pirates. The big sloop began to fall away from the wind. The little sloop slipped by her. Jack threatened his steersman with a shot if he didn't close in with the other boat. At that moment the skipper of the sloop appeared in the cockpit with his revolver.

"Keep off!" he roared, in foghorn tones, "or I'll fire at you."

At the same time he ordered his son back to the tiller.

"I want help," called out Jack.

"Help!" shouted the old man. "That won't go down with me. Keep away, you piratical swabs, or I'll shoot you full of holes."

"I've got five rascals aboard here that I want to turn over to the police," said Jack.

"Why don't you take them ashore, then?" said the old man, who saw the two men in the cockpit of the small sloop.

He also noticed the senseless Bunce lying across the side, and wondered what he was doing there.

"I want somebody to come aboard and tie up these two men so they won't get away," said Jack, who was growing desperate as the boats drew further apart.

The old man told him to go to grass, and the young lineman saw that further argument was useless, so he ordered the chuckling rascal at the tiller to keep on.

CHAPTER VI.—In Which Lineman Jack Comes Out All Right.

Jack felt that he was in a bad predicament. His purpose was to make prisoners of all the rascals, but he was afraid that the two in the cockpit would get away from him if he landed. He therefore determined to keep away from the shore until morning dawned, and there would be men around to help him out. The sloop was in Newark Bay, and her course would take her straight to Staten Island, where the Kill von Kull strait connected with New York Bay. The boy was not familiar with his surroundings and

that was a great disadvantage to him. At the end of the bay were two big towns—Bayonne on the left and Elizabeth on the right. The former lay on the north shore of the Kill. There were few lights visible there at that hour, and Jack didn't know anything about the place. The two rascals in the cockpit conferred together in whispers.

They were trying to devise some way of making their escape, but they didn't see how they could do it. The best the helmsman could do was to make things as hard as possible for the boy. So time passed and the sloop drew near the end of Staten Island. Day was beginning to break, and Jack began to feel better. He saw the houses of Bayonne plainly now, and he ordered the helmsman to steer for one of the wharves.

Feeling certain that the men would try to escape the moment the sloop ran alongside of the wharf, Jack decided to give them no chance. He suddenly ordered both of them into the cabin, threatening to shoot them if they refused. Having evidence before their eyes of what the boy would do if driven to it, they sullenly obeyed, and he closed the door on them. Then he grabbed the tiller and did the rest of the steering himself. The sloop hit the wharf a glancing blow and went on. She finally fetched up with a shock, her sails shivering in the light breeze. Jack pulled the boom in, then jumping on the deck, loosened the sheets and the mainsail came down on the run. He returned to the cockpit without bothering about the jib, and sat down to wait for somebody to show up. As good luck would have it a tugboat from New York, bound for Elizabethport, came along as daylight broke broadly over the scene. Jack signaled it by firing off a couple of shots. The tug's course was altered and she came over close to where the boy was making signals and shouting.

"What's the trouble?" asked the captain, stepping out of the door of the pilot house.

Jack quickly explained the situation.

"Do you mean to say you've caught those pirates who ran off with the railroad float?"

"I've got three of them and two of their friends. This man lying here is the boss of the bunch. I want you to send a couple of men aboard to tie him and the other two fellows who are not hurt. I've got them in the cabin."

The tug edged up to the wharf and was made fast. Then the crew came around to the sloop and boarded her, one of them proceeding to make her fast to the wharf and lower the jib. Bunce was overhauled and found to have a big lump on the head where the butt of the revolver landed. As his condition was not regarded as very serious, his arms were bound and he was stretched out on deck.

The cabin door was then opened and the unhurt pair were ordered out. They protested that they were good, honest citizens, but as Jack's word went, they were tied up.

The two wounded men, Morse and Gallagher, were not in shape to run away, so they were not tied, but lifted on to the bunks to await treatment. A man appeared at the head of the wharf about this time, and he was induced to hunt up a policeman and fetch him down there. The tugboat people having done all that could be

expected of them, left the settlement of the affair in Jack's hands and steamed away to their destination. In the course of twenty minutes a policeman turned up. To him Lineman Jack told his story.

"You are the boy who was with the river pirates on Christmas night, and who narrowly escaped drowning on the tug?" said the cop, who was familiar with the case as set forth in the New York papers.

"You've got it right," replied Jack.

"And you say you were kidnaped last night from the railroad pier by two of these men?"

"Yes. Those two tied up in the cockpit."

"And the other three are the men who stole the car float?"

"That one lying senseless on deck was the boss of the job. The two wounded men acted as captain and engineer of the tug. Two others, named Flanagan and Brady are still at large."

"Have the owners of the tug that was run away with, or the railroad company, offered any reward for the capture of these men?"

"Not that I have heard."

"It ought to be worth something to everybody concerned in their capture," said the officer, who was evidently looking for a little graft.

"I want these men taken to jail, and the facts reported to the railroad detectives. You'll have to get help, so you'd better start for the station-house at once," said Jack.

"I can't leave my beat until relieved, but I'll see that the news reaches the station-house. I'll come back here and help you watch the men."

"They don't need much watching. I'll guarantee none of them will get away."

"Who does the boat belong to?"

"I don't know. It has either been hired for the occasion or stolen."

The policeman departed. The news got around that there was something unusual going on at Welsh's wharf, and a crowd of early morning idlers began to gather in front of the sloop. Jack walked up and down the deck and warned intruders off. He carried one revolver in his hand, more for show than anything else. He was asked a flood of questions, but declined to answer most of them.

"Is that a stiff you've got there?" one spectator inquired, indicating Bunce, who still lay motionless with his eyes closed.

"No, he's very much alive."

"What's the matter with him?"

"He ran his head against the butt of this revolver, and he's sleeping it off."

"Who are the other two gents there tied up?"

"Friends of the party in the trance."

"What have they done?"

"We haven't done anything," spoke up one of the pair in question, trying to arouse the sympathy of the crowd. "We're victims of a gross outrage."

"That's what they all say when they're caught," laughed a heartless bystander.

A wagon containing several policemen rattled on to the wharf. Jack had a talk with the one in charge of the squad. The five prisoners were examined, and then it was discovered that Bunce and Morse were disguised with wigs and beards. When these had been removed they looked quite different. The five were put into the wagon, one

officer left to watch the sloop, and accompanied by Jack the whole party went to the station-house.

There the young lineman made the charge against the men. Morse and Gallagher were sent to the hospital under guard, and the others locked up. The Hoboken police were notified of the capture over the telephone. Word was also phoned to the superintendent of the railroad pier. Jack then went out to a restaurant to get his breakfast. In due time several Hoboken officers appeared to get the prisoners. Bunce, who had recovered his senses, and the two kidnapers were taken before a magistrate, who, after hearing the facts, signed an order delivering the prisoners to the party from Hoboken. Jack accompanied them back. They were taken before a magistrate and committed. Then Jack took a ferryboat across and returned to the railroad pier, where his story was eagerly listened to. After that no restrictions were placed upon his movements. He was furnished with money to pay for his meals and he continued to sleep at the office on the pier.

The company that owned the tug which was stolen sent him a present of \$250 for capturing Bunce, Morse and Gallagher, and the railroad company awarded him \$1,000 for the same service. Jack was thus handsomely provided for, and he felt that his services were appreciated. Furthermore, he was provided with work on the pier at the prevailing wage. Flanagan and Brady were not heard from, so it was assumed that they had fled to a distance to save themselves. The stolen goods were located by the detectives on the case, and the bulk of them recovered. In the course of time, Bunce, Morse and Gallagher were brought to trial, and were convicted chiefly on the testimony of the young lineman. By that time spring had come around and Jack returned to the service of the telegraph company.

CHAPTER VII.—Lineman Jack's Narrow Escape

Jack was sent off down in New Jersey to work with a gang there. The men were all strangers to him, but they appeared to be good fellows—all except one, a man named Grady. He was the oldest of the bunch, and it soon developed that he was a hard drinker. The foreman had considerable trouble with him, but put up with him as he proved, half drunk or sober, to be the best worker in the gang.

He was decidedly unpopular with his associates, for he was not particularly sociable when he was perfectly sober; while when half intoxicated he was sullen, morose and quarrelsome. When real drunk, he was a man to be avoided, for he was dangerous. While he showed no friendship for any of his companions on the gang it was noticed that he had taken a special aversion to Jack Brady. Jack declared he had given him no cause to be down on him, but the fact that Grady was sour on him could not be disputed. Most of the gang were unmarried men, and boarded around the town of Fairfield. They carried their midday meal with them and ate it on the scene of their labor.

The telegraph line followed the railroad, and

the men traveled back and forth either by train or on a handcar. Grady was not supposed to drink while at work, but he did for his appetite for liquor exceeded his power to curb it. If there was a saloon in the neighborhood he found his way back and forth to the bar when the foreman was not near. If the gang was working out in the country, where a saloon was not within reaching distance, Grady never failed to have a flat flask in his hip pocket. The gang did not all work together in one place. Usually three sufficed to make needed repairs to the wires. In cases a pole had to be replaced, or extensive damage had been done by a gale, then the whole gang was employed on the scene of action. Sometimes a new line had to be strung for some distance, and perhaps half the bunch was put on that job.

One morning, Jack, a man named Sanderson and Grady were at work on the outskirts of a village. The foreman was some distance down the road. He hadn't been around for a couple of hours, and Grady had taken advantage of the fact to help himself frequently to his flask. His last drink had finished his supply, and as it was still some time before dinner hour, which would be the first chance Grady would have to go off and try to find a place where it could be refilled, or he could buy another flask, he gradually grew sulky over his work.

The foreman always left instructions with one man, and in this case Sanderson was in charge of what was being done. He found it necessary to speak to Grady several times, and that individual did not take kindly to his remarks. Sanderson, however, was a stalwart fellow, from the West, and Grady did not openly resent his words, though it was easy to see that they chafed him. After a while Sanderson noticed that Grady, who was perched at the top of a pole to which was affixed three cross pieces each carrying six wires, or eighteen in all, was doing very little work.

"Confound that fellow!" ejaculated Sanderson, looking up at him. "I believe he's three-quarters drunk already. Usually he works like a beaver when he's well corned, but this morning he's slower than molasses, and as unmanageable as a mule. Get up there, Jack, and give him a hand. We can't stay all day around this pole."

Up the pole shinned the boy like a monkey. "What do you want up here?" snarled Grady, glaring down at him.

"I've come up to lend you a hand," replied Jack. "I don't want any hand, especially from you. I kin attend to my own work."

"You're taking too long over it. That wire ought to have been in position ten minutes ago. At any rate, Sanderson sent me up here to help matters along. He's bossing the job, and what he says goes."

"It doesn't go with me. He ain't the foreman. Don't come up here or I'll kick you down."

"What'll you kick me down for? I'm here to give you a hand."

"Don't want any help from you. Don't want nothin' to do with you. You're the chap that went back on your pals and got them jugged. You're no good."

"What are you talking about?"

"You know what I'm talking about, you turn—"

coat. Get to the dickens out of here or I'll knock your block off."

At that moment Sanderson shouted to Jack and asked him what he was doing holding back for. The boy with a sudden spring landed his feet on the lower cross-piece. Grady was leaning over the second one, with his feet on the first. He uttered a howl of rage when the young lineman rose up beside him.

"Get off this pole!" roared Grady, furiously, giving Jack a shove that broke his hold and sent him backward through the air.

As the boy fell, one of his legs was caught by the lower wire and he hung suspended, head downward. Sanderson uttered a shout and started up the pole to his rescue. Several men in the neighborhood who had been watching the pair on the pole, attracted by the loud and angry talk of Grady, rushed toward the spot, thinking Jack was about to plunge to the ground.

Grady glared fiercely down at the boy and made no effort to aid him.

"Why don't you help him, Grady?" called Sanderson. "Do you want the boy to break his neck?"

"To the deuce with him," returned the drunken lineman.

Jack, in the meantime, reached up and seized the wire with both hands. There was no danger now of him falling if the wire held, which it was pretty certain to do. He worked himself up to the cross-piece, and, with Sanderson's assistance, got up into his former position.

"I suppose you intended to kill me, Grady?" said Jack to the ugly fellow. "You seem to have it in for me for some reason."

"Yah!" snarled the man. "If you're goin' to work here, I'll go down."

"Stay where you are," cried Sanderson.

"I won't work with this turncoat," retorted Grady.

"You'll work with him if I say so," said Sanderson, decisively.

"You're not the boss."

"I'm bossing this job."

"I'm sick. I ain't able to work."

"You mean you're drunk. You were able enough to throw that boy off the cross-piece. Stay where you are. When the foreman shows up I shall report your conduct."

Grady stayed, and Sanderson returned to the ground.

"If I'm fired I'll kill you," Grady hissed at Jack.

"Maybe you will and maybe you won't," returned the boy, coolly.

"I kin eat you up."

"Try to do it and you'll find me hard to digest. You're a bully, and all bullies are cowards at heart."

"I'll fix you, you turncoat."

"What do you mean by calling me a turncoat? You haven't any ground for it."

"Didn't you go back on your pals and have them all sent away while you got off as clean as a whistle?"

"What pals? I guess you've got me mixed with somebody else. The only pals I ever had were in the last gang I worked with up in the northern part of the State. They were good fellows and we had no trouble."

"Yah! I mean the chaps you stood in with on Christmas night when you stole the tug and the railroad float. If you hadn't turned State's evidence they wouldn't have been sent to prison. You're a traitor, and I hate turncoats."

"I understand now what you mean. They were no pals of mine. They were crooks, and they roped me into the job without telling me what they were up to. I didn't squeal on them, I simply did my best to see they were caught and punished for their crime, which I had no sympathy with."

"You helped them work it."

"I admit I did help them, but it was against my will, and to save my life. Had I refused they would have thrown me into the bay."

"They ought to have done it."

"They did enough. They sent me adrift in the tug with the seacocks pulled out, and I escaped by the skin of my teeth."

"You ought to have gone down in the tug."

"You appear to side in with those rascals."

"None of your business whether I do or not."

Jack said no more, for the work was done. He shinned down the pole, and Grady followed him. Then Sanderson went for the man's scalp.

"You have a grouch against the boy. Everybody has noticed it. He hasn't given you any cause for your nasty feeling that any one knows of. You want to cut it out, or the foreman will cut you out. If it wasn't that you are a worker, drunk or sober, you wouldn't have held on so long. It's bound to fetch you sooner or later, and that'll be the end of you," said Sanderson.

Grady growled and turned away. The party then went on to the next pole. When noon came they were half a mile from the village. Sanderson and Jack sat down by the roadside to eat their dinners, but Grady started down the track toward the village.

"He's gone to get more drink," said Sanderson. "He won't be able to do a thing this afternoon. If I were the foreman I wouldn't have him on the job for a gift. He's the worst cuss I ever ran across. Do you know why he's down on you?"

"Yes. He let the matter out up the pole after the trouble we had."

"Well, what's at the bottom of it? What did you ever do to him?"

"Nothing. He hasn't anything against me on his own account."

"On whose account then?"

Then Jack explained.

"Well, I'll be jiggered!" cried Sanderson. "He must know one or more of the rascals or he wouldn't take up their cause as a personal grievance."

"Perhaps he does, but he didn't say so. He attacked me on general principles. Sometimes men of Grady's stamp act that way, just as other men attack rich people merely because they have accumulated a lot of money. It takes a smart man these days to make big money, and they've got to be even smarter to hold on to it. Most people are lucky to make a good living."

"I don't think I'll ever save enough out of my wages to start a bank," laughed Sanderson.

"None of us make enough to start anything, though all the boys could save half their wages if they wanted to very bad."

"I suppose you do, for I notice you don't booze

with the men, and are pretty steady in your habits."

"Yes, I've got some money in the Fairfield Savings Bank."

"You are sensible. The time to save is when you are young and before you get married. It takes every cent a working man can make nowadays to provide a home and raise a family."

"You're not married, I believe?"

"I can't afford it. Or rather, it's too much of a risk."

"How long have you been in this business?"

"A matter of fifteen years."

"Why haven't you tried for something better?"

"Because I was satisfied to let well enough alone."

"Well, I hope I'll strike something with a prospect next winter — something that'll lead the way to good money. My ambition is to work for myself. I'd like to build up a business that I could depend upon."

"You've got to have capital, and you've got to know the business."

"I won't tackle anything I don't think I will make good at. As for capital, I guess I'll find enough to start with," said Jack, thinking of the \$1,250 he had received for capturing the river pirates.

The noon hour passed and Grady failed to show up.

"He's anchored in the village tavern, and we'll see no more of him today," said Sanderson.

They started to work, and half an hour later the foreman came along on a hand-car. He asked where Grady was. Sanderson said he went to the village at noon and hadn't come back.

"He was boozy when he left, and the amount of work he did since ten o'clock wouldn't hurt a fly," he went on. "He capped the climax by throwing Ready off a cross-piece on one of the poles, and if the boy hadn't luckily caught his leg around one of the wires he'd have been a subject for the doctors or an undertaker."

"What caused the trouble?" asked the foreman.

"Grady was going to sleep over his work, so I sent Ready up to hurry matters. Grady resented his coming, and as he holds a private grudge against the boy, he got nasty and the affair nearly ended in a murder."

"That settles his stay with the gang. I ought to have fired him a month ago," said the foreman.

How Grady got back to Fairfield nobody knew nor cared a whole lot. He reported for work in the morning in a shaky condition. Then he learned he was discharged. Instead of making a fuss, he turned on his heel and went off. Jack spent most of his evenings at the Fairfield Public Library. It closed at nine o'clock, and then the boy returned to his boarding place. On the evening of the day Grady was discharged he was on his way home from the library, his mind filled with visions of his future. The sky being overcast, the night was rather dark. There was only one gas lamp on the street where Jack lived, and that was not near the house.

The cottage stood about fifteen feet from the street line, which was marked by a picket fence and a gate. The intervening space was laid out in a small flower garden and grass plot. When

Jack opened the gate two figures rose up unexpectedly in the darkness, and one of them dealt the boy a staggering blow with his fist on the jaw, which sent him reeling to the sidewalk. The figures rushed out through the gate, and the young lineman was choked into insensibility. The men picked him up between them and carried him down to the railroad. A number of freight cars stood on a long siding. They were closed and ticketed ready to be taken up by the night freight. The men stopped before one of the cars, one of them produced a key which fitted the lock, opened the door, and Jack was showed in upon a pile of grain bags. The door was then refastened, and the men went away.

CHAPTER VIII.—In Which Lineman Jack Finds Strange Company.

Unknown to the men who had thrust Jack Ready into the freight car, the car had an occupant who some hours previous had sneaked inside with a bag of food in anticipation of stealing a ride as far as the car went. This person was curled up on top of the grain bags as far from the door as conditions permitted. The opening and closing of the door did not arouse this person, who slept on unconscious of what had happened.

An hour or so later the cars on the siding were picked up by the west-bound freight and were soon on their way toward Philadelphia. It was about eleven o'clock when Jack came out of his trance. He found himself totally in the dark and moving along at the rate of fifteen miles an hour. He sat up and collected his dazed senses.

Naturally, he asked himself where he was at. The clack-clack of the car's wheels answered his questions to some extent. Those sounds are so familiar to most people that they have but to be heard to be understood. The fact that all around him was dark convinced him he was in a freight car. To satisfy himself that he was not dreaming, he pulled out a match and lighted it. One glance around at the grain bags established the fact beyond a doubt. It also showed him that he was not alone. The glow of the match showed him the form of a boy lying on a higher tier of the bags, apparently asleep. Then the match went out.

He recalled the assault made upon him by the two unknown men in the dark in front of the cottage where he lived, and that explained the cause of his being in his present predicament. They had carried him to the railroad, not far away, put him in the car, and that car was now attached to a train in motion. As the only enemy he had in Fairfield was Grady, and Grady had threatened to do him up if discharged, he had no doubt that that man was the instigator of the outrage. The person who had assisted him was some boon companion whose moral sense was on the same plane as the lineman's. Jack struck another match and tried both doors of the car. They were tight as wax. That settled the question of escape from the car for the present. He didn't care to disturb the sleeper who was locked in with him. That person had apparently taken

possession of the car voluntarily previous to his appearance. Jack had enough philosophy in his composition to make the best of a bad matter. When the train stopped, which it probably would before a great while, he would endeavor to attract the attention of some one of the crew. If he succeeded he would be let out, and whether his explanation was believed or not, he would at least be in a position to get back to Fairfield. So he made himself as comfortable as possible, and waited.

Jack, not being accustomed to keep late hours, soon found himself falling asleep. He aroused himself several times, but finally the somnolent influence got the better of him and he sank into a deep sleep. After a while the train stopped, but not for long. He didn't know it, and his journey westward was extended. A freight car has many disadvantages as a sleeping apartment, chief among which is the shaking up that one receives at times. Jack, however, slept through these incidental inconveniences, which showed that he was a good sleeper, and when morning dawned at an early hour he was many miles beyond Philadelphia.

The early sunlight showed faintly under the car doors when Jack awoke at last, and felt the train still in motion. He knew that morning had come and that he had missed some chances of getting away from the car, although those chances were very slight. An hour elapsed and the train continued its ceaseless clackety clack. Then he heard sounds beyond him that showed him his companion was awake.

"Hello, young fellow?" he said, feeling inclined to be sociable.

Something like a suppressed scream came from the other party.

"Who's there?" he heard a voice say, in quavering tones.

If the matchlight when he first looked around the car hadn't shown him the unmistakable outlines of a boy, he would have sworn that the voice belonged to a girl.

"I'm here—Jack Ready—a boy not much older than yourself," he replied.

"Are you really a boy?" came back.

"Yes, come over here and see."

"I'm afraid."

"What are you afraid of? A kid who will take the chances that go with a stolen ride ought to have considerable spunk. Come over and be sociable."

"You are sure you aren't a tramp, and you won't hurt me?"

"Say, your voice is awfully like a girl's. Are you one in disguise?"

"No, no, I'm a boy. My name is Tom Jones."

"Well, Tom Jones, come here and let's be friends till we part, which will be soon if I can manage to escape from this car."

"If you want to go, why don't you jump off? Is the train going too fast?"

"The doors are locked on the outside."

"Oh, dear, are they, really?"

"They are. We're prisoners for the present."

"You came in here for a free ride, too, didn't you? How far are you going?"

"No, I didn't come here for a free ride, and I'm going no further than I can help."

"Then what are you doing in the car?"

"I'm the victim of a trick put upon me by an enemy."

Jack explained the circumstances surrounding his involuntary presence in the car, and his statement reassured his companion and brought that person forward.

"Where are you bound?" asked the young lineman.

"I'm running away."

"The dickens you are. Where to—Philadelphia?"

"Further than that. I want to get out West to the home of my married sister."

His companion's tones were so unmistakably girlish that Jack struck a match to confirm his suspicions, as well as to show himself.

"Come, now, own up, you're a girl," he said.

"No, no," protested the other.

"I say you are. I can see it with half an eye. The first policeman who sees you will pull you in, and you'll be locked up for masquerading in a boy's clothes."

"Oh, dear, that would be dreadful. What shall I do?"

"You admit you are a girl, then?"

"Y-e-s."

"You needn't be afraid of me. If I can help you out I'll be glad to do it. What's your name?"

"Flora White."

"Well, Miss Flora, why are you running away from your home? You must have a good reason for doing so."

"I have. I've got a stepmother, and she hates me."

"Why?"

"She's got another daughter of her own, and she has made a servant and drudge of me, while her daughter is not asked to do anything."

"And your father stands for that?"

"He dare not interfere. My stepmother runs things to suit herself. I have stood it as long as I could. I had to run away. I just had to."

"Well, you have my sympathy, Miss White. But what induced you to don boys' clothes and hide in a freight car?"

"I intended to pass for a boy, for as a girl I would be at a great disadvantage in many ways. A girl can't travel about alone in safety. I hid in this car because I had no money to pay my fare to the West."

"But your voice betrays your sex, though otherwise you might pass for a good-looking boy, for your hair is short and curly. I should think when dressed up in your best you would make a very pretty girl."

"Thank you for the compliment," said Flora, with a blush. "You are a real nice boy, and I am awfully glad I have met you. You have frightened me about the chances I stand of being arrested for having boy's clothes on. When you leave me I really don't know what I shall do."

"How far out West are you bound?"

"To Bakersville, Wisconsin."

"What part of the State is that situated?"

"It's on a lake near Oshkosh."

"That's a considerable distance from here. It was a plucky thing for you to start on such a journey without money. How did you expect to live on the way?"

"I have a bag of food with me."

"That wouldn't last you long, I guess. I'm

afraid you have undertaken something that you can't carry out."

"I intended to look for work when I left this car."

"You boarded this car without knowing how far it was going?"

"I heard one of the railroad men say it was going to Allegheny City."

"That's opposite Pittsburgh. The car won't be unlocked till it gets there. The only way I can get out is by trying to attract attention to the fact that I am in here. If I am successful, you will probably be discovered, too, and we may both be handed over to the police. I have a good excuse to account for my presence in the car, and a telegram to the foreman of the gang I am working with will set me all right; but you have no excuse, and besides, you are dressed in boys' clothes."

"Oh, dear, what will they do with me?"

"They will notify your father, unless you refuse to give out the true facts. If you won't give an account of yourself the judge might send you to the workhouse for a month, and when you come out you'll be stranded in a strange place, with everything against you."

"You frighten me."

"Well, Miss Flora, I'd rather go the whole trip with you to Allegheny City than get you in such trouble. I believe you're a nice girl, and I like you. I think it is my duty to protect you as far as I can—that is, if you wish to avail yourself of such protection as I can give."

"If you only would," she said, earnestly, "I'd be deeply grateful to you."

"You are willing to trust me, then?"

"Yes, oh, yes. I like you. I know you would not harm me."

"All right. You'll have to share your food with me while we're in this car. When we get out I'll stand by you to the best of my ability."

"Of course, I'll share it with you," she said. "I have a dozen meat sandwiches, and two pies I baked myself, all the bread and crackers there were in the house, and a bottle of pickles, besides other things. I just cleaned the pantry out. Oh, my, won't there be a jolly row when my stepmother calls me in the morning to cook breakfast and she finds me gone, and everything in the larder gone, too!"

The girl laughed heartily, forgetting for the moment her present predicament. Jack grinned in sympathy with her. Then the bag of food was brought down and they proceeded to eat their breakfast, and while they ate they figured how long it would take the train to reach Allegheny City.

CHAPTER IX.—Lineman Jack and His Companion Accept a Proposition.

Lineman Jack and his fair companion in boys' garments were not destined to reach Allegheny City in that car or otherwise. In any case, it would have been a long trip, and as the weather was hot they would have suffered considerably. The morning passed slowly away and noon drew near. The train only ran at intervals after the regular morning traffic was on, passing from siding to siding, where it stood sometimes quite

a while before the freight got the right-of-way for another lap.

A freight train has no rights that anybody appears to respect, though the engineer is always expected to make time somehow. He must cover so much ground and still keep out of the way of everything else on wheels. The freight had been standing for a good twenty minutes on a village siding waiting for a belated express to go by. Jack and Flora were lying stretched out side by side on the grain bags, feeling as if they were in a Turkish bath.

"I wonder if we are going to stay here forever?" said the girl, listlessly.

"Forever and the day after, I guess," replied Lineman Jack. "This is something fierce. One would think this car was over a furnace."

At that moment a shrill whistle sounded down the road. Then with a rush and roar the express went by like a streak of sound. Immediately afterward the freight got in motion and went on again. This time the engineer got a move on his locomotive, and they were soon humming along at thirty miles an hour on a nice, straight, level track.

There was a heavy grade ten miles ahead. The engineer had to make it in the quickest time he could. At the other side of the rise was a down sweep of two miles, at the end of which was a small station and a siding. The freight being on its run, the conductor had directed the engineer to pass this siding if there was no signal set to stop him. He could see this signal a long way off. The conductor calculated that by taking the down grade at high speed the train would easily reach a siding fifteen miles ahead, where he had to stop. This trick was regularly pulled off by all day freight trains when the conductor had no orders to the contrary.

The freight in due time reached the heavy up grade and climbed it at a merry clip, though its speed decreased by degrees. It was going at eighteen miles an hour, with the fireman sweating like a bull when the summit was reached. Then they started down the grade, and the engineer let her go. This was the chance to get momentum enough to carry them economically to the distant siding. As the speed increased, Jack and the girl began to take notice of the unusual gait.

"We're going some at last," remarked Jack.

Half way down the freight was going fifty miles an hour. The engineer saw that the signal was set for a clear road. He let out a long whistle, and threw the throttle wide open. As the train approached the foot of the grade it was making more than a mile a minute. The cars swayed and rolled from side to side, but their weight easily held them to the track. Flora was frightened almost to death, and clung to Jack.

"This is terrible," she quavered. "We'll be killed."

"I guess it's all right," said Jack. "The train is on a down grade, and the engineer is making time. This won't last long."

And it didn't. The wild flight of the freight stopped a great deal sooner than was contemplated by the engineer and conductor. A dozen empty cars were standing on the siding. The switch appeared to be in its proper position for the freight to continue on. Unfortunately, it had been imperfectly locked, or there was something

wrong with it. The heavy freight engine hit the frog with a jolt that threw the engineer and firemen off their seats. Right there it left the main track and went tearing across the rails and sleepers with a series of awful jumps, the forty odd loaded cars following as a matter of course. The whole outfit tore at an angle into the empties on the siding with a fearful crash. Wood and iron flew in every direction, and the shock to the train crew sent most of them flying off into the roadbed of the main track or into the debris of the wreck of empty cars.

Jack and Flora were flung head over heels against a wall of sacks, where they lay dazed and helpless for some minutes. The door of their car was hit by the end of a smashed car and was torn open. The engine landed in the bushes beyond the station and turned half over. For a long distance the tracks at this point were strewn with wreckage, and yet, strange to relate, not a soul was killed, or even fatally hurt. Even the engineer and fireman, when they were picked out of the smashed cab, were found to have sustained only painful hurts and scalds. One trainman's arm was broken, another's leg fractured, while a third had his knee-cap sprained. The others got off comparatively easy, considering what they had gone through. In the midst of the hubbub after it was all over, with villagers from a nearby hamlet running toward the spot, Jack helped Flora White out of the freight car, and led her to a brook under a tree to restore her demoralized nerves. No one noticed them in the excitement of the moment.

"I knew something terrible was going to happen," said the girl, as Jack bathed her face and spoke soothingly to her.

"It's all over anyway now," replied Jack. "I feel sorry for the train crew. I fear some of them must have been killed or badly maimed. Don't tremble so, little girl. You're all right, and so am I. Let us be thankful for our escape. We'll not get to Allegheny City this trip."

That was evident, and as events proved they never got there. The station agent and the conductor got busy, and the main tracks were soon cleared of the debris, so that traffic was not tied up. The entire derailed freight train lay strung out to one side, clear of the main tracks, and a wrecking crew with suitable apparatus was required to get it out of the way. Only two or three of the cars were found to be out of commission, so that they couldn't be taken on their way. What was left of the empties that stood on the siding before the accident would have to go to the scrap heap. The loss to the railroad would probably figure up close to \$100,000. But it might have been a whole lot worse. After Flora had been restored to an easy state of mind, Jack left her reclining under the tree and went forward to investigate the wreck. He learned with a feeling of satisfaction that the casualties were light, and after finding out all he could, he returned to his companion and told her.

"What are we going to do now?" she asked.

"I will have to consider. I haven't enough money to pay our way back."

"I don't want to go back."

"If we continue on we'll have to walk, for the chance of getting a free ride further is not bright."

"I'd sooner walk every step of the way to Bakerville than return home."

"It's more than a thousand miles from here, I'm sure."

"Oh, dear," said the girl, looking at him helplessly.

"Never mind, Flora, I'm going to stick by you. I believe I can do better out West than in the Eastern telegraph service. I intended to quit this fall anyway. As I have over \$1,300 saved up, I can afford to quit now. I'll take you to your sister at all cost."

"You dear, good boy! How I love you!" cried Flora, gratefully.

"Thank you, little one. It is good to know that some one thinks well of me. Are you hungry? It's half-past one. I'll go back to our car and get the bag of food. There is no need leaving it there, as we need it," said Jack.

He fetched the bag and they sampled its contents, though Flora had little appetite after the shock she had experienced. Jack was not bothered in that respect, and they topped off with a drink of cool water from the brook.

"No use of staying here any longer," said Jack. "Let's go on to the village. We'll put up there till I can send for enough money to pay our way to the place you are bound for. I dare say the bank will send me a remittance in a few days."

"My sister will pay you back for whatever you expend on me," said Flora. "She loves me dearly, and will be glad to have me with her."

"You needn't worry about what I spend on you, Miss Flora. It won't break me, I guess," said Jack.

The village was only a short distance away, and they soon got there, and Jack interviewed the proprietor of the little country hotel on behalf of himself and the girl. The boniface was rather dubious about accommodating them, as Jack's word was the only evidence he had that payment would be made. The young lineman assured him that the money would be forthcoming as soon as he could communicate with his bank. Still the hotel man hesitated. At that point a sporty man with a long, black mustache, and sharp, black eyes, stepped up. He was a late guest of the hotel, and had been listening to the argument.

"Are you strapped, young man?" he asked.

"Practically so," replied Jack, eyeing him with some attention, and wondering what was in the wind.

"Out of work, too, I opine?" said the man.

"For the time being, yes."

"Will you go to work for me?"

"For you? What do you want me to do?"

"I am proprietor of a traveling moving picture outfit. My assistant has left me without notice, and I must have another at once, for I'm billed to show at the town hall to-night. Had to cut out the afternoon show because I couldn't get any one who had gumption enough to run the machine. If you'll hitch up with me I'll take you right over to the hall and instruct you in your duties. You look smart enough to be able to take hold right off. It will be a steady job from now till we get out West, then I intend to open a motion picture theatre in some place that promises results. What do you say?"

"I'll take you," said Jack, promptly, "providing you will take my companion along. I'll guaran-

tee she'll earn her keep if you have anything for her to do."

"Nothing doing in the female line unless she can play the piano or sing. If she can do both, so much the better, and I'll pay her a small salary," said the sporty man, dangling his heavy gold-washed watch-chain, which had a dollar watch at the end that went into his pocket. "Where is the young lady?"

Jack motioned Flora to advance.

"Here she is."

"What are you giving me? This is a boy."

"No, she's a girl in boys' clothes. Aren't you, Flora?"

"Yes," she nodded.

"Why this disguise?" asked the movie man.

"For convenience in traveling. Can you play the piano, Flora?"

"Oh, yes. I'm a good player."

"Fine and dandy," said the man. "And sing, too?"

"Yes, I sing some."

"Come over to the hall, both of you. I'll try you out, Miss——"

"White," said Jack.

"And I'll show you how to work the machine."

"Hold on. What do we get per week if we go with you?"

"Fifteen dollars for you both and all expenses."

"What do you say, Flora? Shall we take his offer up?"

"Whatever you do suits me, Jack."

"All right, Mr.——"

"Downy Gabb. Here's my card. We will go to the hall."

"All right, Mr. Gabb. It's a bargain as long as we get real money and our expenses."

Then the three walked down the street to the town hall.

CHAPTER X.—In Which Lineman Jack Acts as a Moving Picture Operator.

The town hall was a large-sized room on the second floor of one of the buildings on Main street. It was chiefly used for local entertainments, dances and other affairs. It was fitted with a platform, provided with a proscenium arch, a pair of steps at one side to reach the platform, a piano of cheap grade on the other side, and about sixty chairs. These chairs were usually ranged around the room against the walls, but when necessary were placed in rows in the body of the hall to seat an audience. Outside talent seldom favored the village, and the hall was generally dark except on Saturday evenings, when the Flushville Coterie held its weekly hop, which was always well attended by the village lads and lasses. The proprietor of the hall carried on a hardware and general store on the ground floor, and was, moreover, the chief officer of the place.

Entrance to the hall was through a side door and up a flight of stairs. Over this floor was a red lamp, with the words "Town Hall" painted on it in white letters. When Mr. Gabb and the two young people arrived in front of the place, they saw a sandwich billboard—two boards joined at the top by hinges and spread out like a tent, covered with a colored picture on either side, above

which was pasted a slip in large type, reading: "Town Hall—to-night." This was followed by: "Motion Pictures." Underneath: Show opens 8 o'clock. General admission, 5 cents. Reserved seats in front, 10 cents. Music by Professor Gotch," the name written in. In the window of the store was a picture sign reading: "Motion Pictures. Town Hall, To-night. Reserved Seats for Sale Here."

Downey Gabb entered the store, inquired as to the advance sale, learned it was good, and got the key to the door. Jack and Flora followed him upstairs. The hall was a bit gloomy near the two windows, between which a platform had been raised on "horses," and inclosed on three sides with tall, hinged frame which could be folded flat. There was a small opening in front through which the moving picture apparatus, out of sight, projected the films on a white sheet stretched taut across the front of the platform on a light framework which could be folded up, while the sheet could be rolled up on a roller and detached. Everything was in position for the show. Downey Gabb first went to the piano and opened it.

"Give us something with a rag-time swing, Miss——"

"White," said Flora.

"You know what rag-time is, I suppose. Make it something lively; put dash into it, and plenty of sound. Understand?"

Flora understood, and as her tastes leaned to rag-time, she produced the goods.

"Ver-y good, Miss White; ver-y good, indeed. Now let's have a song—something up-to-date. If you're not up in the class of songs that go best, I'll get you a bunch of them and you can practice them to-morrow. I won't want you to play to-night, as I've engaged a pianist—a local celebrity; but I shall wish you to sing between the pictures. Now then, breeze away."

Flora sang a couple of rag-time songs quite acceptably, and Downey Gabb declared that she filled the bill, though he expected her to improve.

"Now, young man, we'll hand you out the instruction on the machine. Your name is——"

"Jack Ready."

"Follow me."

Jack soon got the hang of the moving picture apparatus. He was a boy who could pick up most anything in short order. As soon as he had demonstrated his fitness to run the machine, Mr. Gabb told him what other duties he would have to perform. He was expected to make himself generally useful with the show. He learned that the proprietor traveled from place to place in a covered van drawn by one stout horse, and that their migration was performed at night after the performance was over, therefore they only stopped at the hotels for meals. There were two bunks in the van—one appropriated to the proprietor and the other to his assistant. Jack pointed out that this wouldn't do at all with a young lady traveling with them.

"Of course not," admitted the proprietor; "but I'll fix that up. The back of the van shuts in with doors secured by a padlock. There is plenty of room there for a cot, and I'll get a piece of canvas or heavy cloth and screen it off for the young lady's use. She'll have to rough it a little, but she looks strong, and I guess she can stand it. It will be an advantage to her to keep to her boys' attire

until we reach Chicago. She makes a mighty good-looking boy. Where did you pick her up?"

Jack explained the circumstances that brought him and Flora together, and told the proprietor of the show that but for the smash-up on the railroad they would be on their way to Allegheny City. The three left the hall and went to the livery stable, where the horse and van were taken care of. After looking it over, Jack pointed out that with a little ingenuity a carpenter could fix up a small, narrow room in the van for the girl's use, within which she could have absolute privacy. There was room enough by moving the bunk Jack was to use over on the other side in line with Mr. Gabb's bunk. The proprietor agreed to have the matter attended to at the next village, which they would reach early next morning. The party then adjourned to the hotel, where Gabb handed Jack a bunch of handbills and told him to start out and distribute them among the houses away from the business street.

"I cover the town with bills the first thing, but to-day my assistant, who attends to the matter, left me in the lurch, and the two small boys I hired only half did the job. Ring the bells or knock on the doors, and put the bills into the people's hands. I want to pull a good house."

A full house, with half the audience standing, wouldn't pan out more than \$7 at the outside at this place, since the afternoon show had not been given. But then it was a small village, and the hall was not large. At the larger places Gabb had taken in from \$25 to \$40 a day, and occasionally even more. Jack got back to the hotel about six, and soon afterward the three went to supper. Then they went to the hall, where they found the owner's son lighting up. The illumination was furnished by lamps. Gabb secured some planed boards and boxes, and increased the seating capacity of the house for the occasion to about 125. There was still room left for fifty standees. Twenty front chairs had been sold in advance, and twenty more were held in reserve for expected tent-centers. The balance of the house was given over to the nickel patrons.

The people began coming around half-past seven. These were the five-cent contingent, and the house rapidly filled. Village youngsters, boys and girls in their teens, and young married people soon occupied all the five-cent chairs. By eight o'clock every seat in the hall was filled, and standing room was at a premium. Moving pictures were a novelty in Flushville, and the inhabitants turned out en masse to see them. Downey Gabb took in the money himself at the upstairs door, and his cash-box was the side pocket of his jacket. He was a cheap theatrical man, whose long record was a succession of failures at other people's expense. For years before the moving picture industry spoiled his graft he made a specialty of putting "tart" shows on the road whenever he could find a backer who was willing to risk a few hundred dollars for the honor of a brief connection with the theatrical business. Backer and actors suffered alike at the hands of Downey Gabb.

The reputation he acquired among the profession was something awful, yet for all he could always pick up a company somehow. The adage of "a burnt child dreads the fire" did not cut much of a figure with a certain grade of alleged actors and actresses. These people were always willing

to take another chance with Downey Gabb, or anybody, in fact, whose promises were backed by a good bluff, because no real manager would take them on. Mr. Gabb's first attempt to break into the motion picture business was at the expense of a real estate man who was ambitious to be the manager of a movie in the Bronx, New York City. The enterprise, under Mr. Gabb's direction, proved a failure, and the backer sold out at a considerable financial loss. Finding himself out in the cold and with no immediate prospect of roping in another "angel," Mr. Gabb conceived the brilliant idea of doing the provinces, meaning the villages and smaller towns, with a traveling motion picture show.

With the money he had extracted from the credulous real estate man he bought a cheap outfit, the films being ones that had seen their day and which he obtained for a song, leased a furniture van, which he altered without the owner's permission, and started out. So far he had done much better than he deserved, for he showed mainly at small places where anything in the moving picture line went. It was something new for him to operate on his own money, and the small success he was having had swelled his managerial head considerably. He felt as big as Frohman, or any other successful theatrical manager, as he took the nickels at the door of the Flushville Town Hall that evening. Finally the hall was jammed, and after turning down the two lamps that had remained up he gave the signal to Professor Gotch to open the proceedings on the piano, which that person did with a classical piece that gave Mr. Gabb a pain.

Then the first of the single reel pictures was flashed upon the screen by Jack. It wobbled in places where the films had been imperfectly joined. However, the people seemed pleased with the subject and clapped when it was done. Gabb then sent the boy-like Miss White to the piano, and her song took with the audience. An encore was called for, but Gabb wouldn't have it, and Jack flashed the next subject on the screen. Flora was then allowed to sing again, and was once more roundly applauded. The show lasted an hour and a half, then Jack flashed "Good-night." The audience got up and dispersed to their homes without expressing any disapproval, though outside of the music and singing it would have been classed as "rotten" by people accustomed to better things.

"Now, Ready, we'll take down the screen and the box," said Mr. Gabb, when the last spectator had departed.

This was soon done. Leaving the boy to carry the paraphernalia to the sidewalk, Mr. Gabb went for the van. Jack, Flora and the goods were awaiting on the walk when he drove up. All the frame-work was tied under the wagon, the machine and the rolled-up screen only going into the wagon. The canvas screen to hedge off Flora was put in position by Jack, her cot put against the locked back door, and with Jack as driver, the outfit started off along the country road in the darkness.

Jack and Mr. Gabb took turns driving the horse all night. The next stop was reached about six o'clock next morning. Then Jack and Flora went to a hotel, washed up and had their breakfast at Gabb's expense. The proprietor of the show hunted up a hall. Only a few people came

to the evening show, and Mr. Gabb was out some money for expenses. They went along to the next town that night. Another frost met them at both shows and Mr. Gabb was so short of money he could not pay the breakfast bill. Then to cap the climax, Gabb disappeared and could not be found, leaving Jack, Flora, and the horse and van behind. The hotel man placed an attachment on the horse and van, but allowed Jack and Flora to occupy it at night. As Gabb had not owned either horse or van it did not trouble him what became of them.

Jack got the idea in his head that he could run a movie show and made up his mind to see about it.

In the meantime a church was to have an entertainment that night and a committee came to Jack to show his pictures at the affair.

Realizing that Gabb had left him and Flora in the lurch, Jack had no qualms about making use of the paraphernalia, so he struck a bargain with the committee with the result that he received \$10 that night after the entertainment was over. He paid the hotel man \$5 to look after Flora and took a train for New York next day. As soon as he arrived he called at his bank and drew \$100, visited a film exchange, told them he was going into the traveling picture business and was accommodated with some of the best reels in stock.

After securing everything that afternoon Jack started for the town where he had left Flora and the moving picture outfit. He was joyfully received when he arrived there. He immediately hired the Opera House in the town, had handbills printed and flooded the town with them, and had a record-breaking crowd at the evening performance on Saturday night. He cleared nearly \$100. He had the van refitted up for Flora's benefit, bought a second horse and made a team of it, and started on the road the next morning with great encouragement for the future of the show.

CHAPTER XI.—Lineman Jack Builds A Business For Himself.

Flora rode on the seat with Jack, and as the day was a fine one they had a pleasant ride to Fairview, which they reached late in the afternoon. After putting up his team at the hotel, and registering Flora and himself, he made inquiries of the hotel man about the place. He learned it had a Town Hall, with a small stage and scenery, and that it was over the postmaster's general store. The village had only a weekly paper, which came out on Wednesday, so he could do no advertising that way. After supper he and Flora walked about a part of the place, and Jack guessed he would be able to do some business there even on short notice. He hired the hall for \$5 next morning, secured a license for \$2, and then hung up as much display about the entrance to the hall as he could find space for.

The postmaster, who owned the hall, allowed him to put a large picture in his window. He sent Flora around to the chief stores to secure the privilege of displaying smaller pictures in their windows, giving out two and sometimes three reserved seats for the evening show. He hired a wagon, covered a framework with pictures, and a

cloth sign reading: "Town Hall—Moving Pictures—This Afternoon at 2 and To-night at 8. Admission Five Cents. Evening, Ten Cents. Reserved Seats, Five Cents Extra." The wagon covered the whole village and the chief street several times, a boy playing on a drum to attract notice. The hall seated 300 people, and standing room could be found for 100 more. Every seat was filled at the afternoon show, and a number of people had to stand. The receipts amounted to about \$21. Jack had a full house that evening, and took in \$29. His entire expenses, including hotel charges, did not exceed \$20.

He started out at midnight to drive to a small village eight miles away. He reached the place at two o'clock, found the inn, and drove into the yard. Covering the horses, he turned in on his bunk, half undressed, for the rest of the night. The hostler found the rig there when he got up at six next morning. Jack turned out at seven, registered for himself and Flora, called the girl, and at half-past seven they went to breakfast. There was a small Town Hall here that held about 250 people, with seats for 150. Jack hired it for \$3, got a license for \$1.50, put up his bills, and hired an express wagon to advertise the show for two performances, afternoon and evening, admission five and ten cents, no reserved seats. He got full houses, ad took in about \$35. He played two other villages on Wednesday and Thursday, making a small profit in each place, and then drove to a fair-sized town, which he reached on Friday morning.

This place had a regular Opera House, but Jack was disappointed to learn that he could not get it for Saturday night. He found a large assembly room on the main street, and rented that for Friday and Saturday. He gave four shows in the town, and did very well by getting a hustle on. He advertised both night shows and Saturday afternoons in the evening paper. The town had no morning paper. The display he made on the outside of the hall pulled the people as much as anything else. Jack and his outfit pulled out for the next place on the road on the following morning.

"I'm doing a whole lot better than I expected, Flora," he said to the girl, as they drove along in the sunshine of the Sabbath morning.

"You deserve to, for you are giving a good show," said Flora. "Mr. Gabb's performance was a wretched one. His films worked badly. The people in them didn't walk natural. Every once in a while one of them would start off with a jerk as if he were operated by a string. It made me laugh to watch them."

The cause of this strange phenomena having been explained to Jack, he told the girl what caused it—the film had been torn at those places, and to repair it two or three of the sections had been cut away. The skipping of those sections caused the jerky effect.

"For an experienced manager Mr. Gabb's methods of pulling a house while we were with him was pretty crude," said Jack.

"I think it was myself. Your plan of sending a wagon around with picture bills on it, and the announcement in big letters on cloth, is much better."

"That's my opinion, if you have a bell or a drum to attract attention to it. It hardly pays to stop

at the smaller villages. That was well enough for Mr. Gabb, for no large place would stand for his pictures after the people saw what they were. He might just as well have taken out good films. The first cost wouldn't have counted in the long run. I guess he must have picked up what he had for next to nothing. He was a cheap skate, anyway. I doubt if we'd have got our wages if the show had kept on."

"Where are we going now?"

"To Brookville. It's an average size village, I was told. It's going to take some time to reach your sister's at this rate, but you'll have money enough, I hope, when you get there, to get yourself a fine outfit."

"I don't care. I'm glad I ran away since I've traveling this way and playing and singing before an audience. If my stepmother saw me at the show she'd be horrified, and my step-sister would hold her nose in the air."

"What do you care for them? They treated you as mean as dirt."

"I don't care. I'm glad I ran away since I've met with you. You've treated me fine. Really, I don't want to part from you when I reach my sister's. It will probably be late in the fall when we get out there. You won't want to travel this way in the winter. The roads would be filled with snow, and it would be awfully cold in the wagon."

"That's right. If things go right I'll get a fresh supply of the latest films in Chicago when we get there, with the idea of opening a moving picture house in Oshkosh and running it all winter and spring, or maybe indefinitely. I should like to have you with me, but I suppose I can't expect that. Your sister would object even if you didn't."

"If you need me, I'll stay with you anyway. I like you as well as though you were my brother."

"I reciprocate the feeling, Flora. We met under strange circumstances, and we had a strenuous experience on the freight train. I guess fate intended us to stick together. The moving picture business might put a lot of money in our pockets."

"I hope it will put a lot in yours, at any rate."

So they rode on, and along about noon reached their next stand. We have not the space to detail the varied experience of the erstwhile Lineman Jack and his fair companion on their long journey to the Northwest. It is enough to say that success as a whole marked their progress from village to village, and town to town. In most of the larger places they encountered more or less opposition from the established picture houses, but Jack always managed to attract good, if not

always crowded, audiences. Flora steadily improved in her playing and singing, and her chic ways took with the crowd. She was really a big card. Jack got her photographed and displayed her picture in the stores and in front of the hall, calling her "Vaudeville's sweetest singer and pianist par excellence."

By the time they reached Chicago, Jack had a bunch of money, mostly in the shape of money orders on Oshkosh, with a couple on the post-office of the Windy City. They took a week off in Chicago to see the town and to enable Jack to visit the big film companies and arrange for his intended venture in Oshkosh. Then they went on. At Oshkosh Flora fitted herself out with a supply of new clothes, and then Jack, leaving his outfit at a livery stable, took her to her sister's by train. She received a great welcome, in which Jack participated. Flora had written her from time to time en route, telling her of her connection with the traveling moving picture business, so that it was no surprise to her when they told her the full story.

Jack went back to Oshkosh and fitted up a motion picture theatre in a central location with his funds, and when he sent for Flora to rejoin him, the girl's sister offered no great objection, for she saw that Flora was much attached to the young lineman that was, and she believed Jack shared the same sentiment toward her. The stationary movie panned out from the start, being greatly helped by Flora, who was now an admitted artiste in her line. Jack had an operator to run the machine, and a girl to sell tickets. He kept his show well before the public and changed his bill twice a week. He made a feature of one three-reel subject on his bill, with one two-reel and two one-reel pictures. Flora gave two songs at each show, and opened with some short piano piece that had swing to it. Long before spring came around Jack had built up a solid business in the picture line, and he had no wish to go on the road again. The constant association of the two young people developed into a love match, and in the course of a couple of years Flora married Lineman Jack.

Next week's issue will contain "BARRY & CO., BANKERS AND BROKERS; or, THE BOY MONEY-MAKERS IN WALL STREET."

"How old is your little brother?" inquired Willie. "He's a year old," replied Tommy. "Huh! I've got a dog a year old, and he can walk twice as well as your brother." "That's nothing. Your dog's got twice as many legs."

CURRENT NEWS

CARROTS IN ANIMAL'S DEN

A bushel of carrots was found in a den made by a pocket gopher, or a ground squirrel. Ole Larrison, section hand, of Tekoa, Wash., noticed a large mound of new earth near the right of way. A foot and a half down was a circular den, neatly carved out and filled with freshly pulled carrots, tops and all, evidently stored for the winter. Larrison and others of the section gang declare the nearest field from which the carrots could have come was half a mile away.

TREE LIMB BRINGS \$5,000.

A single branch of red apples has been sold by Lewis Wood of Ferrell, Gloucester County, N. J., to a big nursery for \$5,000. The apples on this branch are of such a superior kind, being better than the fruit from the rest of the tree, that a survey of the orchard has been made by certified engineers and the record and agreement of purchase has been filed with the County Clerk.

Wood received \$1,000 outright for the apple branch and is to get \$4,000 additional in installments at the rate of 2 cents each for every tree budded from this branch, which is to remain on

the original tree in the orchard. The purchasers are the Stark Brothers' Nurseries of Missouri.

PLAN PALESTINE EXCAVATION

British archaeologists are greatly interested in plans for early excavation of the ancient City of David on Mount Ophel, near Jerusalem. Three attempts have been made in recent years to probe into the secrets of this hill and with some success; but practically the whole of the Jews' original stronghold, the palace and mill of David and probably the tombs of the Kings of Judah will be revealed after archaeologists go thoroughly into the work.

Among the obligations taken by Britain in connection with control of Palestine is that of promoting archaeological research and an area of ten acres has been preserved by the administration for excavation. East of the Jordan, it is said, there is one immense, practically untouched field. Many of these sites are of importance equal to that of Palestine itself. They include ancient Gerasa, where there are wonderful remains of a Roman city, which show that it was one of the most imposing cities of the Roman period.

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Down By Poverty

— OR —

A POOR BOY'S STRUGGLE FOR SUCCESS

By GASTON GARNE

(A Serial Story.)

CHAPTER VII.

The Future Begins To Look Brighter For Harry Hale.

The young girl turned around from the bed, and her gaze fell on Harry, who colored up in confusion when he met her eyes and realized that the had been staring at her in quite an unpardonable fashion.

And now it was the turn of the young girl to show surprise, and for one brief instant she stared at Harry as though unable to credit the evidence of her senses. Then she came forward with outstretched hand and a glad smile on her face.

"Oh, I'm so glad to meet you again," she said, in her honest, unaffected style, the style that had so much affected Harry when he had walked at her side in his much worn suit, and she gave him her hand in such a joyous way that the boy blushed more deeply than ever.

"Why, Christine," cried Mr. Crossman, "how do you come to know him?"

"Papa, he is the young man who saved me from being robbed when I took the wrong car after my visit to Brooklyn."

"Ah!" cried her father, "then we are both under obligations to him, for he is the brainy lad who bound up my leg after my fall."

Harry was shaking the small hand that the pretty girl had put in his, and in his excitement was working it up and down like a pump handle.

"Well, well, well," said Mr. Crossman, looking on with evident approval. "This is really remarkable. I felt very grateful to you for saving my girl from the hands of that robber, and had told the police about it and asked them to find you for me, and now this happens."

"And now that we have found him, papa," said Christine, "what are you going to do about it?"

"That is what I want to find out," was the answer. "This young lad will not accept any financial reward, and I do not know what to do for him. What is your name, my boy?"

"Harry Hale, sir."

"And your age?"

"Sixteen, sir."

"And what do you do for a living?"

"Sell papers, sir."

"A strongly-built boy like you ought to be able to do something better than that."

"I know it, sir, but since the age of ten I have been doing that because my mother needed support, and that was the only thing I could do that would bring in ready money. Lately I have tried to get something better, but having no reference was against me."

"I understand. Where is your father?"

"Dead, sir. He was a commission merchant over on the west side, and was very well to do until he met with an accident that took all his money away, and left my mother a penniless widow."

"A commission merchant on the west side, and met with an accident that ruined him financially and finally resulted in his death?" rather excitedly said Mr. Crossman, peering sharply at Harry. "Do you mean to say that you are the son of Chester Hale, who kept in Washington Market?"

"I am, sir."

"I knew your father well. In fact, he came to my aid in a financial crisis that at one time threatened to swamp me, and if I had known where to find his widow I would have shown my gratitude. My boy, I am in business in Washington Market, and nothing would please me more than to have the son of my old friend in my employ. I have always required either reference or bonds, or both, from those I have employed, but in your case none will be necessary. I shall be out of here in a few days, and in a week you may come to see me at the market, and we'll talk over things. What do you say?"

"I can only say that I shall be very happy to enter your employ, sir," answered Harry, and then caught Christine's eye and blushed.

"Very well, then, we will consider it settled," said Mr. Crossman. "Come and see me a week from to-day."

"Thank you, sir," said Harry, and then bowed politely and started for the door, but Christine, who did not mean that this intended matter should fall through, ran after him with a business card that gave him the address of her father's place in the market.

"I shall see you there, for I call on papa almost every day."

Then she gave Harry another of her bright smiles, the kind that turned the poor boy's head, and he hardly knew how he went down the steps until he found himself in the street, and realized that he had been too confused to use the elevator, as other persons were doing.

Harry scarcely seemed to walk on the flagstones as he made his way home, and the world seemed very bright to him, indeed. The pretty girl who had smiled so sweetly on him evidently felt friendly towards him, and her father would no doubt employ him, and those two things were quite enough to change the color of the world for Harry Hale.

Within two blocks of his home a stone whizzed past his right ear, neatly clipping the upper edge of it.

The stone was a large one, big enough to have knocked Harry down had it hit him fairly, and the least that it would have done would have been to cut his head open.

After clipping his ear the stone struck a post and rebounded to Harry's feet, and the boy cast one glance at the ragged edges of the missile, and then whirled short around on his heels. There was a truck standing outside a store about fifteen or twenty yards distant, and the boy was just in time to see the gang leader, Monk Wardman, dodge behind the vehicle.

(To be Continued.)

ITEMS OF GENERAL INTEREST

PIGEON STOPS UP FLUE

A fluttering homing pigeon nearly caused the death of Charlie Meyers and his entire family at Pottsville, Pa. Mr. Meyers, who is City Assessor and a newspaper publisher, was awakened by his wife, who was suffering from inhalation of gas, which had also affected the members of the family. Investigation showed that the chimney was blocked by a pigeon that had fallen down the flue, its wings being spread upward, blocking the draught. Dr. Earl Stevenson was called and revived the victims.

315,265,000 STAMPS BREAK BUREAU RECORD

The largest single day order of postage stamps in the history of the Postoffice Department was turned out Oct. 30, by the Bureau of Engraving and Printing.

The number was 315,265,000. The stamps, consisting of all denominations, were shipped to fifteen of the largest postoffices of the country in 1,702 packages, each 14 inches long, 12 inches high and 10 inches wide. It took 568 mail pouches to carry them.

Demand for stamps during October has already exceeded all records, and the Bureau of Engraving and Printing is having the greatest difficulty in keeping up with the flood of orders.

JAPANESE TOYS

Christmas toys from Japan being unloaded at Seattle, Wash., are said to include novelties made from tin which has crossed the Pacific many times.

The tin cans originally are used in shipping case oil to China, there refilled with soy bean and other vegetable oils and reshipped back to the United States.

These cans, emptied into tank cars in Puget Sound ports, were then purchased by agents of Japanese toy factories, flattened out, baled and sent back to the Orient as low-rate ballast cargo. Once in the toy shops of Japan the much used tin was quickly made over into very attractive amusing mechanical playthings for boys and girls of America.

Japan while almost self-supporting in all her world-wide commerce, lacks for manufacturing purposes three essentials—wood, iron and tin.

FACTS ABOUT WATCHES

The whims and caprices of a watch are a deep mystery. The many parts of a time piece apparently enter into a conspiracy to the end that the owner may miss trains, ferries and business appointments.

One very common cause of the watch gaining or losing is the disposition made of it at night. If you wear a watch next to your body during the day and place it on a cold surface, as a marble mantelpiece, at night or anywhere in a cold room, the watch is sure either to gain or lose. Cold causes contraction of the metals used in the construction of a watch, and the watch consequently gains.

An expensive watch which has a compensating balance is of course, not affected by changes of temperature. Some metals expand in cold and others contract, and the compensating balance is made of both kinds of metals so that the contraction of one may balance the expansion of the other.

Everybody knows that the proximity of a dynamo will magnetize the steel parts of a watch and ruin it for the time being. A watch may be affected by electricity without the owner having been near a dynamo. The amount of electricity in some people is so great that it affects the steel parts of a watch. Watches slightly magnetized are often brought to the watchmaker, who demagnetizes them. Persons of high electric organizations should wear a watch with a steel case if they wish to retain an accurate timepiece.

A watch should never be laid horizontally at night, but should always be hung upon a nail. Change of position will not affect a mechanically perfect watch, but such a watch is yet to be made. Therefore always keep your watch in the same position night and day.

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HARRY E. WOLFF, Publisher, Inc.

166 West 23d St., New York

Life Among The Lions

By ALEXANDER ARMSTRONG

We were two very old friends, Jack Macy and I. My name was Harry Morton. We had been at school together at our home in England, and had run away together from that school. We had a little money, but not much to spare, so we wisely decided to use it sparingly. As we wanted to go abroad, our only chance was to work our passage.

Not at all particular as to our destination, we took the first opportunity afforded us and both shipped on board the good ship *Empress Queen*, bound for Port Elizabeth, in South Africa. I was the cabin boy, and Jack helped the cook in the galley. Well, you may be sure we had a rough time of it; not that we expected anything else.

After a quick passage we landed in Africa. We then found to our amazement that the captain concluded we had shipped for the voyage out and home. He maintained this, and apparently had the law on his side.

Naturally we didn't run away from England in order to go back again immediately. We therefore took the law into our own hands.

Packing up all our belongings—they weren't many—we left Port Elizabeth and joined a party who were on their way to the diamond fields at Kimberley. There we went into the diamond digging business ourselves. We were fairly successful, and got together a few hundred pounds. Possibly if we had remained at work we might have become rich men. But it was too monotonous, and we longed for a change.

Just at this time people in Africa were in a fever of excitement about a country called Mashonaland, lying far away.

The British South Africa Company had got possession of an immense territory. Perhaps it would be more correct to say that they had appropriated this territory. The next step was to take possession. Imagination pictured it as a land of milk and honey. Gold and precious stones were said to exist in plenty. There were also lions in abundance, and all sorts of wild animals.

To cut my story short, Jack and I determined to call up all we had in the world, and with the proceeds—a part, at any rate—to buy guns and full equipment for a great hunting expedition.

The prospect of mining for gold had a charm for us.

"Harry," said Jack, "no more digging for me—time enough for that when we are older. Now's the time for sport," to which sentiments I cordially agreed.

The company had arranged to dispatch a long train of wagons right up to Mashonaland, and we decided to go with them, if we could fix terms.

This was done without any difficulty, and one fine morning we started with a large number of wagons loaded with stores and mounted escort.

Progress was necessarily slow. After a few days' journey we found ourselves in a new country. Roads had to be made in some fashion before the train could move along. Rivers had to be bridged over. All this took time.

The rivers were literally alive with crocodiles. Woe betide the unfortunate animal that attempted to ford the streams.

Well, after journeying along for about five weeks, Jack and I, in accordance with previous arrangements, left the party when we came to the River Noemiyi.

We were to strike into the interior of the country in a small canoe we had brought with us. Nothing was settled about joining the train later, it being understood that we should probably be back in a few months, and would be sure to fall in with some party going either to or from Fort Salisbury.

Just after leaving our friends, a feeling of depression came over us at finding ourselves alone in the vast bush. But this soon wore off. There was a multitude of game of every kind, and the footprints here and there of buffaloes and hippopotami, which we saw on the river's brink, promised us sport of a most exciting nature.

Our baggage was of the very lightest description. Plenty of ammunition and a blanket apiece to wrap ourselves in at night were the principal items. These, with a few other articles, were stowed away in the canoe.

For some hours we paddled along. In places the water was so thickly overgrown it was with difficulty we could proceed. At length it began to get dusk, and we looked about for a convenient place in which to pass the night. This was soon found.

The first thing we did after landing was to light a huge fire.

In the first place it kept off the savage beasts who were prowling about, and secondly its warmth was not to be despised.

Those who have not been in Africa can scarcely realize how delightful it is even in that hot region of the earth to enjoy the warmth of a good fire at night.

Tired out with our exertions, we were soon asleep, our rifles by our sides.

That night, notwithstanding the fatigue, I was very restless, and well for me I was.

I had a feeling of being in a horrible dream, with a gigantic snake creeping toward me. But it was no dream. I was awake and saw a huge monster crawling slowly and gradually along to where we lay.

For an instant I was spellbound. I couldn't move. Then I realized the awfulness of the situation. I seized my gun, raised it to my shoulder, waiting until the snake raised its head, then I discharged the gun full at it.

The shot blew the creature's head off. He gave a few convulsive movements, and was dead.

Jack woke at the noise, which naturally alarmed him. He was even more so when he saw the cause of it. The dead monster was a gigantic python, measuring about eighteen feet in length. I need hardly say there was no more sleep that night. We sat up and talked until the dawn, when we had breakfast. We reckoned after this meal to keep our table supplied with game we shot, what we had brought with us having been eaten.

After breakfast we started off right into the bush. We were well armed, having each a rifle, plenty of ball cartridges, and good hunting knife.

Moving along was difficult. The grass was very long and the ground in many places very swampy. Soon we got in the open country.

We saw huge footprints on the ground. What beast or beasts—for there were many had passed that way—they were we were not certain. Our inexperienced eyes could not detect the difference. Now we should have some sport. We resolved to follow the trail.

We moved along cautiously, till at length we came to a small clump of trees. We had got through to the outer edge, when to our amazement grazing right in front of us were five huge hippopotami.

They were about a hundred yards away, with their bodies turned toward us. To aim at them would be useless. The bullets would simply drop off their tough hides, and the consequence of disturbing them in this manner might be unpleasant to ourselves. Still he meant to have a shot at them. How to do so was the question. Jack suggested going right around the belt of trees and getting in front of them. As they were going in that direction they would pass close to us if we concealed ourselves in the bushes. We carried out this plan and lay perfectly still. Then we saw through the bushes, which were not very thick, the herd coming slowly and lazily toward us, the male leading. Jack singled out this one, and I selected another for my victim. They crashed through the bushes just a few yards to our left. As they got exactly opposite at the same moment we both fired. Jack's shot struck the monster right in the ear, and he dropped almost instantly with scarcely a struggle. I heard my bullet hit some part of the brute I aimed at, but it took not the slightest effect. We got ready for a stampede, for we expected an attack, but they all made off as fast as they could, their huge bodies and short legs giving them a ludicrous appearance.

We cut off part of the breast and cooked him over the fire in the evening. But his flesh was as tough as leather.

Next morning, fully armed, we started out into the forest. We were unusually careful now that we expected to see a lion. But the roaring last night showed there were lions in the neighborhood, and that caution was necessary. We shot two wild boars which were the nicest eating of any animals we met with. And these can be found in plenty.

Traveling was difficult. We pushed our way along through the dense wood and the long grass, looking out all the time for game. I was leading a little, but we were walking in a parallel line, Jack, two or three yards away from me, being in the rear.

And at once, to our amazement, we came face to face with a full-grown lion. Immediately I raised my gun to my shoulder. I should think the lion was about twenty yards away. He glared fiercely at us, and lashed the ground with his tail, waving his black mane about angrily. Then he emitted a roar the like of which I never heard. It commenced with a low, rumbling sound, then swelled and ended like a clap of thunder. The earth seemed to shake.

I am usually very cool. And I don't mind admitting that on this occasion some of this quality had deserted me.

I stood with my rifle at my shoulder covering the savage brute. But I seemed unable to pull the trigger.

I was to fire first. This was the arrangement. Jack was to keep his gun for emergency.

And this, though it takes long to describe, only lasted a few moments. If I had fired when I first covered the lion with my gun I should have had a capital chance of striking him in a vital part.

I lost my opportunity. All lions, as is their habit when attacked, crouch down like a cat, exposing only the upper part of their head. As the bushes were rather high not much of him was visible.

The difficulty now was how to get a shot at him. He would not attack until after a shot had been fired. There we stood facing each other. I moved three or four paces to one side. By this means I was able to get a chance of aiming at his temple. If I could hit him between the ear and the eye he would be killed instantly.

I had got round so as to obtain a good view of the lion's head, and was just taking aim. All at once, Jack caught his foot in the undergrowth, which was very thick. He stumbled and fell forward. As he did so his gun, which was cocked, went off with a loud report.

In a moment the lion rose to his full height and jumped toward us. Instantly I fired. My shot hit him and he gave a howl of pain.

Then he crouched down as if about to spring, having his head embedded between his paws. Our position was desperate.

Both guns had been fired, and we appeared at his mercy. Strange to say, at this critical moment, all my nerve and coolness returned to me. I immediately slipped a large hunting-knife over my wrist, and prepared to load my gun without delay, keeping my eyes fixed all the time on the ferocious animal. Jack was lying where he had fallen with the bushes partially concealing him. He had hurt his leg, and it was a fortunate thing for him it was so. If he had arisen he would have been a dead man.

For at this moment the lion made a terrific spring. He miscalculated the distance and passed clear over Jack's body, alighting three or four paces beyond on the other side.

Instantly I wheeled around to face him, and as he turned, taking good aim, I fired. The ball lodged just over his eye, and he fell dead. What a magnificent creature he was, fully eight feet long, with gigantic limbs and muscles.

Then we skinned the monster and took his skin back in triumph to the camp.

After this we had great sport, killing altogether five lions, but, fortunately, we had no more hair-breadth escapes. The sport was quite dangerous enough without.

Then we started on our homeward journey. Our canoe was loaded with our trophies. We had five lions' skins aboard, several leopards' skins, and some tusks of hippopotami.

When we got right down the river to the place where we had left the train of wagons we pitched our camp. About two weeks after a party came along from Fort Salisbury. We joined them on the homeward journey. We were returning well pleased with our hunting expedition.

FAME AND FORTUNE WEEKLY

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ITEMS OF INTEREST

CHILD'S TINY FINGER KILLS FATHER

The tiny finger of his baby snuffed out the life of Fred Kraus, a 35-year-old farmer, living four miles south of Hudson, Col. Kraus was leaning on the muzzle of a gun and talking to his wife, when his 3-year-old son, playing on the floor, caught at the stock of the shotgun, his finger pulling the trigger.

DRUNKEN FISH

Here's a story for which the State police vouch:

Confiscated liquor valued at \$15,000 was poured into the Assawuga River, Conn., with the result that hundreds of fish are suffering what in the old days was known as hangover.

Pickarel and shiny minnows frolicked along side by side. Huge black bass floated down stream on their backs and were easily picked up by hand.

The Wauregan mill race was so choked with a drunken conglomeration of finny creatures that they had to be scooped up by the hundreds before the power machine could function.

HUMAN STILL

Prison authorities investigating the ineffectiveness of the Eighteenth Amendment in the penitentiary, discovered that convicts had invented a "human still."

Gathering weeds growing in the prison yard, the prisoners placed them in buckets of water, according to the investigators, and after the concoction reached the desired degree of fermentation, the inmates swallowed it, following it up with a chaser of water in which sugar and yeast had been dissolved.

The result, the investigators disclosed, was a startling jag that lasted indefinitely. The prison yard weeds have been cut.

TRAPPERS EXPECT BIG HAUL

Predictions are made that the trapping season, which opened Nov. 10, will bring an even larger return than last year, when more than \$1,000,000 was realized from the pelts of the fur-bearing animals of the Adirondacks. This is due to

market conditions which have resulted in an increase of from 10 to 25 per cent. in the prices of furs and the fact that the number of animals in the woods is unusually large.

One of the largest fur dealers in the State advised the trappers to get busy the moment the law is off. He said he would buy every prime pelt brought to him and would pay better prices than have been paid in a number of years.

The principal fur-bearing animals which can be legally trapped in the woods after Nov. 10 are fox, mink, otter, fisher, skunk, ermine, raccoon and muskrat. It was reported some time ago that the otter were disappearing, but woodsmen declare that such is not the case.

LAUGHS

Mamma—Who is to have the biggest apple? Georgie—Me! Dot—No, me! Georgie was eating apples two years 'fore I was born.

"Mary, go into the sitting-room and tell me how the thermometer stands." "It stands on the mantelpiece, just ag'in the wall, sir."

Jack—How is your sister getting on with her singing lessons? Cissie—Well, papa has taken the wadding out of his ears for the first time today.

"I find it impossible to kill the nerve!" exclaimed the dentist, in a troubled tone. "What can it mean?" "I'm a drummer." with a ring of pride in his tone.

"Two hours of sleep before midnight is better than four after that hour." "Fiddlesticks! Two hours' sleep after one is called in the morning is better than all the others."

"I told her I was afraid to kiss her while we were on the tandem, for fear we would both fall off." What did he say?" "She said she hoped I didn't call myself an experienced wheelman."

"What are you doing, you young rascal?" said a farmer to a small boy under a tree in his orchard with an apple in his hand. "Please, sir, I was going to put this 'ere apple back on the tree, sir."

Teacher—Do you understand the meaning of the terms capital and labor? Boy—Yes, sir; I know what it is. If a boy coasts down a hill, that's capital. If another boy rides the bicycle up, that's labor."

Mawkins—What's become of Gambit? I have not seen him for some time. Skarem—Oh, he's in the hospital. A case of nervous prostration. He over-exercised, you know. He is a great chess player, you know, and sometimes when he got thoroughly aroused he has been known to make three moves in half a day. No man, you know, could bear up under such killing exercise as that.

GOOD READING

PRAYS WITH GUN AND BIBLE

The Rev. W. E. Smith, itinerant evangelist, opened his services in Latimer County, Okla., the other night by removing a loaded gun from his hip pocket and placing it beside his Bible. After the convocation a second gun was placed on the left of the Scriptures.

The meeting was carried to a normal conclusion without incident, notwithstanding previous threats to the preacher that he would not be permitted to speak.

Mr. Smith told his audience "a certain element" did not wish him to hold his meetings. Shortly after services were under way two automobiles loaded with men attired in the regalia of the Ku Klux Klan arrived.

trees by the thousands. They are little brown mites, three-sixteenths to one-eighth of an inch long, which suck the sap from the leaves and squirt it out of their bodies. This secretion is the liquid that appears to be rain. Dr. Humphreys says there are dozens of trees in Washington that are producing the same kind of "rain."

The liquid produced by plant lice is of a honey dew consistency and stays on the pavement or ground much longer than would the same amount of rain water. It has been suggested that something of this sort made the famous manna of the Israelites in their flight through the wilderness from Egypt.

Rain seldom falls in a ground-wetting shower over an area of less than one square mile, although a few drops may fall over a much smaller area, says Dr. Humphreys.

"PLASTIC WOOD" A NEW PRODUCT

A new product, made by colloidal processes and just put on the English market, is announced by the *Chemical Age*. The interesting thing about this product is that it may be used to repair broken or worn wooden articles. A pattern is made of the article and the plastic wood is filled into the mold and allowed to set hard. This takes but a few hours, and the product obtained is said to be extremely hard and possessed of all the characteristics of wood except that it will not absorb moisture as wood does. The hard plastic wood can be worked with the usual carpenter tools, and nails, screws, etc., can be driven into it without fear of splitting.

A ONE-INCH RAINFALL

An acre of ground contains 43,560 square feet, according to English and American measurement. A rainfall of one inch over one acre would mean the total of 43,560 multiplied by 144, or 6,272,640 cubic inches of water. This is equivalent to 3,630 cubic feet. As a cubic foot of water weighs about 62.4 pounds, the exact amount varying slightly with the density, it follows that the weight of a uniform coating of one inch would be 3,630 multiplied by 62.4, which equals 226,512 pounds, or 113 1-4 short tons. The weight of one gallon of pure water is 8.345, consequently of one inch over one acre of ground would mean 226,143 divided by 8.345, which equals 27,143 gallons of water to the acre. This is equivalent to 603 barrels of forty-five gallons each, and would be sufficient to fill a tank or pool about twenty feet square and nine feet deep.

INSECTS CAUSE MINIATURE RAIN

A "Rainfall" over an area only ten feet square was recently reported in Alexandria, Va. Protesting at the fanciful explanations and the mystery that has been thrown about this phenomenon, Dr. W. J. Humphreys, Professor of Meteorological Physics of the United States Weather Bureau, declares that plant lice produce the supposed "rain."

These insects are found on sycamore and other

CHESS TO PAY HIS WAY THROUGH COLLEGE

Three years ago Augustine F. Massa, a lad totally blind, applied for admission to Columbia, but was turned down on the ground that his handicap was so great he could not attain the scholastic standard of the college. Undaunted, he persuaded the authorities to give him a trail in the Department of Extension, and at the end of the first term he had made such a creditable record that the bars were readily lifted for him and Dean Herbert E. Hawkes allowed him to enter as a full-fledged student.

To-day Massa is a student in the Columbia Law College, having received one of the three scholarships in law offered. He also won many other undergraduate honors. He is a member of several student organizations and holds important class offices. He is an expert chess and checker player and a member of the varsity wrestling squad.

In addition to the handicap of blindness, Massa is entirely on his own resources. During the summer he engages in exhibition checker and chess matches, often playing a dozen contestants simultaneously, with smooth boards and checkers and chessmen varying only in color. During his second year he won the Kiloire Medal as the intercollegiate heavyweight wrestling champion.

Many have marvelled at the way Massa goes about unaided over the campus and in and out of the buildings. He never uses a cane, once he becomes familiar with a locality. He walks with a sure, unhesitant step. He travels through the subways alone and has never been seriously injured.

Next spring he will get his A. B. degree, and in 1915 he will be graduated with the degree of bachelor of law from the Law College. When asked how he is able to perform these seeming miracles, he said:

"The answer is simply visualization plus memory. Sometimes I imagine I see; I create objects in my mind to correspond to those I know are about me."

INTERESTING NEWS ARTICLES

SIZE OF PEANUT DOUBLED

Children and elephants will be delighted to learn that a farmer along the lower Columbia River has developed a new mammoth peanut with four kernels. The new variety, named the Klickitat peanut, is about twice as large as jumbos. Soil conditions in the section enabled the production of peanuts with three and four nuts and Elias Rankin used these for seed. Careful selection for successive plantings has resulted in the new mammoth peanuts.

MOUNTAIN OF TOOTH POWDER

Nevada for years has been mining silver, copper and gold, but now it has turned to mining tooth powder.

Twelve years ago Mack Foster, an old "desert rat" and big game hunter, discovered Mount Supperdent and found its peculiar mineral would take the tobacco stains off his teeth. Other prospectors took to using it, but nobody thought of staking out a claim there. Eventually Foster told a man named Fenwick about the mountain.

Fenwick's secretary, a Western girl named Josephine Robinson, tried some of the material and found it most effective. Fenwick staked the claim in a hurry and now he and his associates are sweating to keep ahead of the orders.

The material mined from the mountain not only cleans teeth, but polishes silver, manicures nails, shines up optical goods, whitens shoes and makes a fine shampoo. Physicians are using it, too, for a surgical powder. Science calls the material "diatomaceous deposits." The mountain is out in the sagebush desert, about thirty miles from Tonopah.

LANSING, MICHIGAN, RUNS TO HOG FARM

Lansing, Michigan, is the first city to maintain and operate successfully a hog farm and has the first municipal hog ranch in the United States. More than 1,500 pigs have been occupants of the municipal hog farm at one time and the "piggery" has returned to the city a profit of more than \$1,000 per month besides solving the greatest civic problem—the disposal of the city garbage.

One month the municipal piggery brought to the city funds \$5,000 instead of the \$1,000, but that was when an extra number of hogs were sold on the Detroit market in July and at the top mark. For twenty-two years previous to this experiment nearby farmers took the garbage and later a Cleveland firm had the contract for disposing of the city garbage, but results were not satisfactory.

To-day the householders of Lansing pay only \$1 per year to have their garbage removed two or three times per week, the \$1 charge being to provide for the renewal of the galvanized disposal cans.

The piggery is located in Eaton County. There are a number of white houses on this farm where the pigs live. The offensive smells have been

kept to a minimum, and with some newer buildings and sewerage in course of construction it is expected these will be eventually eliminated.

To make this plant more effective, a hog hospital is installed and all hogs are given a serum treatment at the age of three months so that to-day every hog at this plant is immunized against any of the dread hog diseases—especially hog cholera. These healthy municipal fatted hogs are said to be the best on the market, and bring the highest price.

The Contingent Fund of the city is now boosted about \$16,000 to \$18,000 per year, the residents are saved over \$5 each per year and with some 10,000 homes the hog has come into his own at Lansing.

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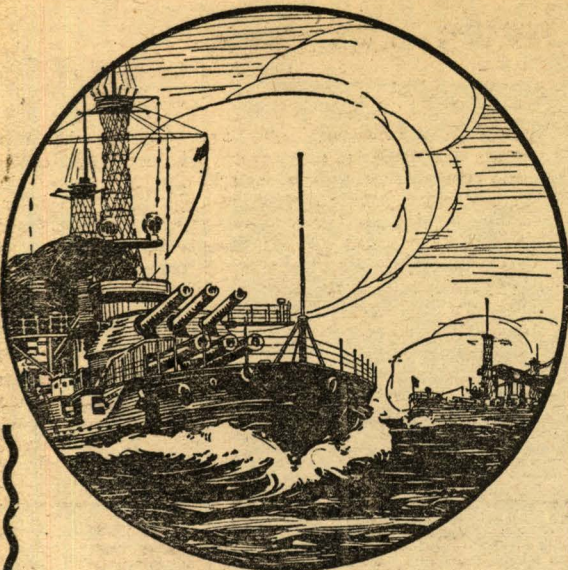
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SOLD HIS FOR \$10.00 AND ORDERED ANOTHER.

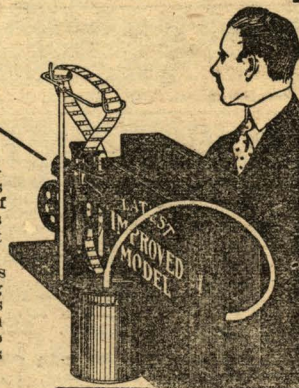
Some time ago I got one of your Machines and I am very much pleased with it. After working it for about a month I sold it for \$10.00 to a friend of mine. He has it and entertains his family nightly. I have now decided to get another one of your machines. Michael Ehereth, Mandan, N. Dak.

WOULD NOT GIVE AWAY FOR \$25.00

My Moving Picture Machine is a good one and I would not give it away for \$25.00. It's the best machine I ever had and I wish everybody could have one. Addie Bresky, Jeaneville, Pa. Box 84.

BETTER THAN A \$12.00 MACHINE

I am slow about turning in my thanks to you, but my Moving Picture Machine is all right. I have had it a long time and it has not been broken yet. I have seen a \$12.00 Machine but would not swap mine for it. Robert Lineberry, care of Revolution Store, Greenboro, N. C.



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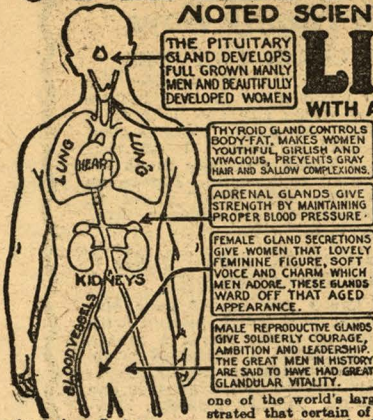
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VITALITY AND THE GLANDS

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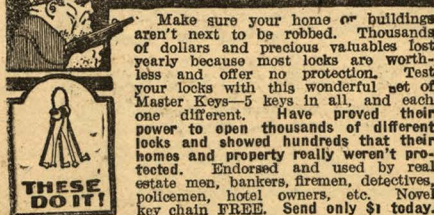
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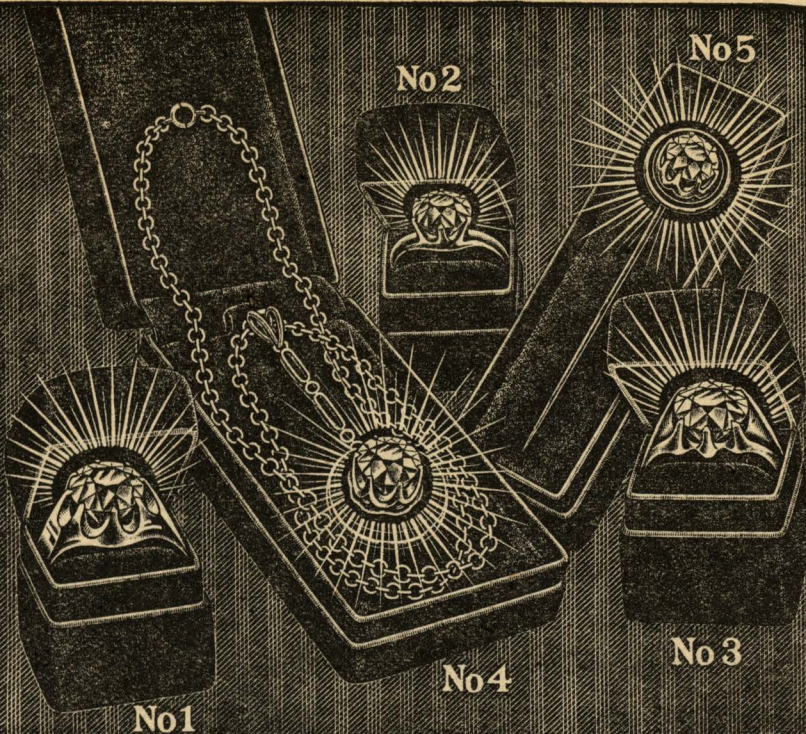
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